

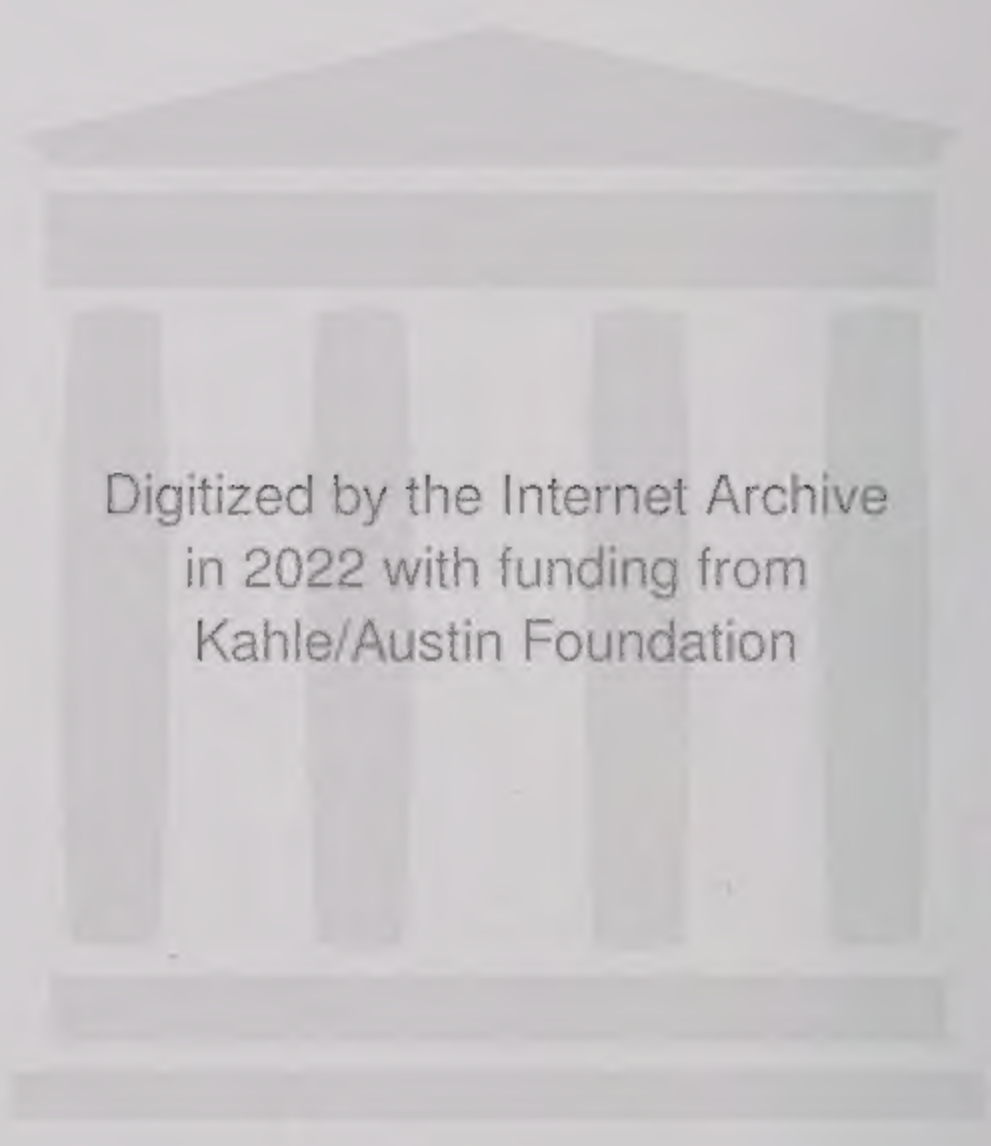


MICHAEL BURK

NUREMBERG 1946 — For a band of fanatical
Nazis the war is not yet over . . .

The Tribunal





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THE TRIBUNAL

This novel describes people and their destinies directly involved with the trial by the International Military Tribunal from 1945-1946 in Nuremberg of the chief war criminals of the Third Reich.

The dialogues between the defendants, prosecutors and judges have been reproduced in their original form. The characters of the novel have been freely invented, but not their destinies.

An attempted attack by seven members of the SS on the court with the aim of freeing the defendants has been officially confirmed by American Headquarters. The date has been altered.

The Tribunal

Michael Burk

**Translated by
Marcus Bullock**



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Those accused as the chief war-criminals
In the order of seating determined for the trial :

Hermann Wilhelm Goering, *Reichsmarschall*
Rudolf Hess, *Hitler's Deputy*
Joachim Ribbentrop, *Foreign Minister*
Wilhelm Keitel, *Field-Marshal*
Ernst Kaltenbrunner, *SS-Obergruppenführer*
Alfred Rosenberg, *Chief Ideologist*
Hans Frank, *Governor-General of Poland*
Wilhelm Frick, *Minister of the Interior*
Julius Streicher, *Editor of 'Der Stürmer'*
Walther Funk, *Minister of the Economy*
Hjalmar Schacht, *Financier*
Karl Dönitz, *Admiral of the Fleet*
Erich Raeder, *Admiral of the Fleet*
Baldur von Schirach, *Gauleiter of Vienna and former Reich Youth Leader*
Fritz Sauckel, *Minister of Labour*
Alfred Jodl, *Colonel-General*
Franz von Papen, *Ambassador*
Robert Ley, *Organising Head*
Arthur Seyss-Inquart, *Commissioner of the Netherlands*
Albert Speer, *Minister of Armaments*
Konstantin von Neurath, *Protector of Bohemia and Moravia*
Hans Fritzsche, *Chief Commentor*

In absentia :

Martin Bormann, *Reichsleiter*
Gustav Krupp, *Arms Manufacturer*

Robert Houghwout Jackson
Chief Attorney for the United States of America :

‘We must never forget that the record on which we judge these defendants today is the record history will judge us by tomorrow. To pass these defendants a poisoned chalice is to put it to our own lips as well.’

General Statement by the Defence Counsel on the fundamental decisions of international, criminal and procedural law in the Charter of the International Military Tribunal :

‘According to the International Law of 1939, war is not an indictable offence. The Charter represents a law which was only created after the fact. The judges are only drawn from one side of the belligerent parties, which wrote the constitution of the court and made the rules of the criminal law as well as being both prosecutor and judge at the same time.’

Book One

THE PROSECUTION

Chapter One

Harry S. Truman, President of the United States, sat at the desk in his vacation house in Key West. The clock in front of him showed a few minutes before midnight.

With a weary gesture he pushed away the tray with the half-full glass of Safety Harbor and a sleeping tablet, knowing that not even powerful medication would be able to still his thoughts.

Thoughts of a city which he only knew from books, articles and above all the reports of his aides. Brooding over the most monstrous event of his period in office so far.

It was not until June of the previous year that the United States had finally succeeded in persuading Great Britain, France and the Soviet Union of the necessity for a trial of the principal German war-criminals. A few months later this greatest trial in the history of the world had actually begun. Now, at its climax, it was threatened by a terrorist attack on the court.

Truman took off his gold-rimmed glasses and rubbed his eyes. If the C.I.C. did not succeed in uncovering the network of conspirators and working with the military police to prevent the attack, the orderly close of the trial would be seriously jeopardised. And only a handful of people knew of the chain of events which had been set in motion just a few weeks after the beginning of the trial in Nuremberg.

The defendants took off their heavy headphones, stood up and remained motionless and disinterested as the court withdrew.

It was 5.01 p.m. on Wednesday, the 20th of December 1945. The 27th day of the hearing was over. The press balcony emptied even faster today than on other days. Not one of the approximately 250 reporters, correspondents and official observers from all over the world felt any desire to stay in the city any longer than absolutely necessary. They had all been longing for the Christmas recess for weeks.

All except one. The man who had been assigned seat number

3 in the first row remained seated. With satisfaction he watched the rush which visibly increased towards the high folding doors. In one hour at the most the city would belong to him alone.

Raoul Clairon leaned back, took a deep breath of the stale air and gazed at the brown-panelled court-room through half-closed eyes. He gazed at the two long benches for the accused, the judge's bench, the glass partitions in front of the interpreters' seats, the witness-stand and the groups of spot-lights. He could still hear the constant, unvarying murmur of voices during the hearings. He felt contented.

Deliberately, he rose to his feet. He would have preferred to remain where he was, if need be, even until the resumption of the trial on the 2nd of January.

He felt at home here.

The BMW 328 drove into the courtyard just as Clairon stepped from the back entrance of the law-courts. Clinton Keen braked so hard he set the gravel flying and Clairon leaped aside. 'Are you crazy?'

Clinton pushed open the door and laughed. 'Thought there had to be something that would make even a chief commentator jump.' Then he slid out easily and gave Clairon a friendly box on the arm. 'You all through?'

Raoul Clairon raised his chin. Beside Clinton's gawky frame his 5feet 9inches seemed almost small. 'Yes,' he said, 'all through. And the C.I.C.?'

'It's already in the Christmas spirit,' laughed Clinton. He took out a packet of Philip Morris', tapped a cigarette out for Raoul and gave him a light.

'Thanks.' Raoul took the first draw with pleasure. He pointed to the clothes Clinton was wearing. 'You have it pretty good.'

'Unspoken agreement,' Clinton smiled, 'for special agents uniform is only important for receiving pay.' He held the rank of captain, was head of the C.I.C. in Nuremberg, and hated the uniform. Whenever he could manage it, he wore his dark blue suit with a white open-necked shirt. On special occasions he would force himself to wear a tie.

Clairon was different. He was never seen without his brown U.S. service jacket with the 'Haiti' stripes sewn on the shoulder. For him, the uniform was like a protective shield. In his wardrobe hung ten immaculate suits for all seasons of the year. But he never wore them.

'What are you doing tonight?' asked Clinton vaguely, run-

ning his fingers through his crew-cut hair.

'This is an important evening for me.'

'Fräuleins, huh?'

'No,' said Raoul snappily, and his eyes went even smaller than they already were behind the thick lenses of his glasses.

'Well, it's your business, I guess,' said Clinton, as he spotted Bob Hammersmith coming across the courtyard.

Lieutenant Bob Hammersmith belonged to Colonel William Andersen's unit, which was responsible for security in the law-courts. His young, open face beamed as he caught sight of Clinton.

They knew each other from Texarkana, the town between Texas and Arkansas. Chance had brought them together here in Nuremberg.

'What's new at the zoo?'

'Yeah,' Bob said, 'Goering's talking philosophy.'

Like most of the men in his unit, Bob Hammersmith found the former Reich Marshal Hermann Goering the most interesting character among the accused. They weren't even particularly sure of the names of the other twenty-one.

'Okay,' said Clinton, 'We'll let Goering talk philosophy.'

He swung himself behind the wheel of the BMW, waved to Clairon and pushed down the door-handle for Bob.

The long corridor was a good four yards wide and separated from the floor above by secure wire netting electrified twenty-four hours a day.

The cells were on both sides of the corridor. They were numbered from 1 to 23. On each right doorpost were fixed powerful rotating flashlights. Every door had a round peephole with a grille.

In the cell there was a plank bed by the door to the left with two coarse woollen blankets. Immediately next to the head end were the table and angular chair. Opposite them stood the chamber-pot.

Hermann Wilhelm Goering, former officer and Commander-in-Chief of the German Luftwaffe, Air Minister, Prime Minister of Prussia, President of the Reichstag, Forestry Minister and Reich Marshal sat on his plank bed and spooned soup out of a tin bowl set on the chair in front of him.

He was still dressed in his grey-beige uniform with riding boots, and he looked tired. A few minutes before, the court psy-

chologist, with whom he had had a lively conversation, had left.

Goering had been expounding his thoughts on geo-politics. 'Don't worry,' he had told him, 'the day will come when the world thinks quite differently about all this. And even the German people will see things differently. Now, of course, they are tearing us to pieces. Perhaps they will even brand us in their desperation.'

'But all that will change; just let them get the feel of your military regime for a bit longer. Mistreatment, poverty, looting, unemployment. Eventually they will realise who their real enemies are. Remember what I have told you in five years' time. They will be united in a hatred of you that will be worth seeing! And that will give them the strength to wrest back power.'

He now put the spoon in the empty bowl, pushed back the chair, and stood up, breathing heavily. After a few moments he gave the bowl a cursory rinse, pulled off his boots, stepped into his slippers and lay down on the bed.

All at once his mind went back to Bad Mondorf. Bad Mondorf, that idyllic little place in Luxemburg, from where, four months ago now, they had been brought in two American military air-transport to Nuremberg.

He wished he was back there. There he had found the treatment he considered fitting. But here . . . ! His gaze swept mechanically round the cell, and he shuddered. The bearings of that afternoon . . .

'Attention! The Tribunal!'

That was the piercing voice of the Marshal of the Court, The U S. Colonel Charles W. Mays.

Goering pressed the key beside his seat and received the translation he wanted over the headphones. First key: original language. Second key: English. Third key: Russian. Fourth key: French. Fifth key: German.

'Achtung! Das Gericht!'

Everyone rose.

One after the other, the four judges and their four deputies entered the room. Each time in the same sequence: two Frenchmen, two Americans, two Russians and two Englishmen. Except for the Russians, who appeared in uniform, they all wore black robes. They made a slight bow towards the prosecutors and the press balcony. The court sat.

In the middle, Lord Justice Sir Geoffrey Lawrence presided

over the court. He was a striking figure: bald, with a full face, and spectacles which had a way of sliding down his nose — ill-tempered, but not without a certain dry British humour.

Beside him to the left sat his deputy, Justice Sir Norman Birkett, and beside him, the Russian Major-General Iola T. Nikichenko, thin-lipped and wearing rimless glasses. On the outside sat Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander F. Wolchkov, with his thick, flowing hair.

On the right of Lawrence was the American Francis A. Biddle with his small beard, and then his deputy John H. Parker, an elderly man, plain and honest.

On the outside sat the ancient Frenchman Donnedieu de Vabres and his deputy Robert Falco, who generally seemed to be smiling.

They had taken their seats, and Lawrence had instructed the prosecution to address the court. The U.S. prosecutor Major Warren Farr was continuing his statement from the previous day, which contained the charges against the S.S., against the S.D. and against the Gestapo. Goering was implicated both as founder of the State Secret Police and head of the Reich Intelligence Council.

Shootings of prisoners-of-war by the Waffen-S.S. Liquidation of Jewish prisoners. Brutal beatings. Severely wounded men buried alive. Refrigeration experiments on concentration camp prisoners . . .

Figures, dates and names were presented. Facts to which, if it would have done any good, he would have liked to close his eyes.

Facts which supported the films shown a few days earlier. Films made in concentration camps within the U.S. Zone.

Pictures which beggared description. Horrors for which words failed. Mountains of naked corpses. Emaciated skeletons tipped from lorries into enormous pits. Nameless. Soulless. Former human beings. An atrocious nightmare.

During the showing of the film the room was darkened. Only the accused were picked out under spotlights. Their emotional reactions had to be visible to the psychologists. When the film was over and the lights came on again, a sombre silence reigned over the prosecuting benches.

Hess, Hitler's deputy, had started to make some comment, but Goering, sitting next to him, whispered to him to hold his tongue.

Twenty of the accused sat with bowed heads. Only Schacht had turned away, kept his arms folded and stared straight up towards the gallery.

He had not given the pictures a single glance.

Clinton Keen and Bob Hammersmith had landed up, just like every other evening, in the mess of the former S.S. barracks at the end of Allersberg Street, where the army had set up its largest camp. Lorry park. Supplies. G.I. billets. The PX here was better stocked than all but a few places in the zone, and the mess took advantage of it. Canned beer flowed in unbelievable quantities and every imaginable American brand was on sale. Bob and Clinton felt they were among their own kind here. Now and then they would get the feeling they were in some God-forsaken hole somewhere in Illinois or Wisconsin. Why should they hang out in the flattened city?

'Captain Keen?' An orderly approached them.

'Yes?'

'Telephone, Captain.'

It was his assistant on the line.

'What's this all about, Joe? We're just getting into the most fantastic orgy!'

'Clin, listen, I wouldn't have bothered you if it hadn't been ...'

'Okay, Joe, let's have it.' Clinton was under no illusions. If Joe called him from the office at this hour, it had to be something urgent.

'I can't tell you over the phone ...'

'Sure, sure, did Rita Hayworth drop in for a surprise visit by any chance?'

'Clin, this is serious!'

Clinton could hear the warning undertone in Joe's voice. 'Okay,' he said quickly, 'I'll be there in twenty minutes.'

Twenty minutes later Clinton braked the BMW in Kneipp Street in front of his office at number 4. His apartment was in the next house.

Clinton asked Bob to wait for him in the car. In the office he gave Joe an enquiring look.

'Next door,' said Joe with stoical calm, and made a movement with his head towards the door to the interrogation room.

'And who is it?' asked Clinton, his hand already resting on the doorknob.

'A German. He's come of his own free will. That's all he said to me.'

'That's all?'

'Seemed very self-confident.'

'Ah!' said Clinton, repressing a wicked little smile. 'I'll cure him of that.' He nodded an invitation to Joe, and they went into the next room.

The interrogation room differed from the stark, white-washed office only in the two powerful lamps set up on the right and left of the desk-top and directed in front of it. They were not on at the moment.

The man who was sitting on the chair in front of the desk rose, clicked his heels together softly and made a slight military bow.

He was Clinton's height, with the face of a hawk and sparse blond hair. His long grey leather coat hung loosely about his body.

'May I introduce myself?' he said in a grating voice.

'No!' Clinton cut him short. 'You will wait until I ask!' With a movement of his hands he instructed Joe to switch on the lamps and take a pad for notes.

The man in the grey leather coat cleared his throat angrily. Clinton sat down behind the desk as though he had not heard it and inspected the man thoroughly.

About fifty, he thought. An officer, judging by the leather coat. Intelligence quotient under 90. But on this point he had so often been mistaken he would not rely on it.

'Okay,' he said, out of the darkness, 'what is your full name?'

'Harald Erich Steinbronn,' came the grating voice, 'I have come to you of my own free will in order . . .'

'Just answer the questions!'

'Yes.' The man could scarcely conceal his fury.

'When were you born?'

'On the 4th of April 1894.'

'Where were you born?'

'In Stettin. That's in Pomerania.'

'I know that.' Clinton raised his voice imperceptibly.

'I'm sorry,' said the man, and held his hand in front of his eyes.

'Keep your hand down. I want to see your face.'

'Yes.'

'What was your occupation?'

'Storm-troop commander in the Reich Central Security Section.'

'The Reich Central Security Section was big.'

'Department Roman Six.'

'Soviet Union,' said Clinton.

'Yes, Russia,' said the man.

'S.S.,' said Clinton.

'Yes, S.S.,' came the hesitant reply.

'Why didn't you say so, then? All right, once more.'

'S.S.-storm-troop commander in the Reich Central Security Section, department Roman Six.'

'Okay,' said Clinton and leaned back satisfied, 'now tell us what brings you to us.'

The man cleared his throat again. His voice was thick. He groped inside the pocket of his leather coat, took out a handkerchief and wiped his forehead.

'I am here,' he said tonelessly, 'to inform you of a planned conspiracy against the court.'

At about the same time, Raoul Clairon was leaving the 'Nuremberg Radio Studio' in Allersberg Street. He had not neglected to end his commentary on the trial with his usual cynical condemnation of the entire German nation. The commentary was broadcast by Radio Munich every weekday over every station in Germany and Austria.

There were only a few newspapers. The occupying forces issued permits only after the most rigorous examination. On top of that, even the few licensed sheets were short of paper. They appeared on Wednesdays and Saturdays with just four pages. *The Nuremberg News* alone received a special allowance for the duration of the trial and was able to appear three times a week. Likewise *Die Neue Zeitung*, which was printed by the U.S. Army.

Clairon's commentary was therefore the only current daily report from the court-room, and this enabled him to become, within a few weeks, the most hated man in Germany. He basked in the role.

'Slow down!' With an outstretched finger he tapped his chauffeur on the shoulder from behind. He wanted to enjoy the journey, savour every yard of it.

These months belonged to him. He was born in misery, and had spent his youth in misery. Now he was determined to wrest his greatest triumph from the misery of others. The thought had spurred him to action ever since the day the U.S. Third Army had freed the prisoner Raoul Clairon from Dachau.

His ferocious determination to triumph was driving him this evening to keep an appointment which he would not have been able to imagine even in his wildest dreams in Dachau. He could not have suspected that it would set in train unforeseeable consequences for the trial and mark the beginning of his total destruction. In Burgfarrnbach, a village on the outskirts of Fürth, he had the car stop.

‘Kretschmer, you wait here.’

‘Yes, Herr Clairon.’

‘And you will forget this trip.’

‘Yes, Herr Clairon.’

‘If you should breathe a word . . . !’

‘Certainly not, Herr Clairon.’

‘Remember, your brother was in the S.A. since thirty-five!’

‘I know, Herr Clairon.’

‘All right then.’

The timber frame building of the Post House Inn stood on a little area curving off the Wurzburg Road. Clairon strode purposefully up the creaking staircase which led to the first storey. He knew the room number, and that was enough. The landlord called up to him from the foot of the stairs but Clairon did not even turn round.

Number 5. He knocked. A soft, feminine voice came from within. He went inside.

The woman corresponded in every way to his image of a blonde German mother, a type to which he had always felt drawn. He controlled himself, refusing to allow that feeling to emerge now. The stakes were too high.

He looked around the room, at the stoneware wash-basin, the table with heavy turned legs, the enormous high bed, and then back to the occupant. Nothing about her or her surroundings suggested that standing before him was one of the first women of the Third Reich.

She watched him uneasily. All she had known of him before was his voice, soft but spiteful. Now she could see that the voice on the radio fitted the man. Thick lenses in his glasses, not very piercing eyes, spidery hands.

She offered him the only chair and sat down on the edge of the bed herself.

'You call yourself Berger now?' he said to open the conversation.

'Only until it is all over. So long as I have to avoid reprisals by the people. Other wives of the chief defendants do the same thing.'

'Does anyone at the inn know who you really are?'

'No, I don't think so. At least no one has shown any sign of it.'

'How lucky for you.' He fumbled in his pocket for a moment, brought out a packet of Chesterfields, took one, lit it, and then acted as though he had momentarily forgotten to offer one to her.

'Cigarette?'

'No thank you I have given up smoking . . . ' she left the sentence unfinished. Clairon knew exactly what she meant. She was prepared to do without cigarettes while only the foul-tasting German ones or the astronomically expensive American ones were available.

'Let's get down to business,' he said, unimpressed. 'I have heard through private channels that you need help.'

'I have been trying to get in touch with my husband for weeks. You know all too well about the controls that make it impossible.'

'Not even through his defending counsel?'

'Dr. Vesenstedt? No. He refuses. The risk, his conscience . . . '

'Vesenstedt has pangs of conscience?' Clairon spoke with contempt.

'Mr. Clairon,' she said, plucking up all her courage, 'it is a matter of . . . ' She faltered. Then, with a swift movement, she took a match-box from the bedside table and passed it to him.

He opened it and looked up as though waiting for her to explain.

'Yes,' she said quietly, 'a capsule of poison. Perhaps you have already heard of them?'

He nodded. 'Potassium cyanide. Himmler killed himself with it.'

'I read about it in a newspaper,' she said. 'Himmler is supposed to have died instantly.'

'In less than twelve minutes,' he said matter-of-factly.

'I don't know. All I know is that the ampoules were distri-

buted about three months before the end of the war by the Central Security Section.'

'And only to the very top Nazis, I understand. And this capsule?' He weighed it curiously in the palm of his hand. It was about half an inch long and not quite as thick as a cigarette.

'My husband's. He refused to use it, and asked me to destroy it. But I kept it. Now it would be worth having.'

Astonishing, the courage of this woman, thought Clairon with a certain admiration. She was ready to send her husband to his death with open eyes in order to spare him the shame of ending his days on the gallows. For there was no question, as far as he was concerned, that 'Berger' would be executed. 'Do you think your husband has so little chance, then?' he said. 'Are you so convinced of his crimes?'

'No,' she replied, her voice hard, 'but I'm convinced that the judgments have already been made. From everything I know about this trial.'

Clairon considered. Should he explain to her how the hearings were being conducted? With what quite pedantic thoroughness the Allies were proceeding? With what forbearance crimes were being judged for which there could really be only one punishment: death? Should he actually tell her how humanely the trial was being pursued?

'Apart from your husband, do you know which of the accused received these capsules? Goering? Schacht? Funk? Sauckel?'

She shook her head. 'I don't know about any of them. We lived a very secluded life.'

'But perhaps your husband told you about one of them. He must have known! Think!'

'No,' she said icily, 'he told me nothing about it. Can we get on to the business part now, Mr Clairon?'

He flushed. 'Do you trust me?'

'Yes,' she said, 'I have no other choice. You are the only man I can ask to deliver this package to my husband.'

'And how much is this delivery worth to you?'

'This.' She took a second box from the bedside table, considerably larger and elongated in shape, and opened it. There was a necklace inside. 'Rubies,' she said. 'Once it cost two hundred thousand.'

'Or nothing at all. If it was torn from the throat of a Jewess.'

She swallowed. 'It cost two hundred thousand! Is it a deal?'

'All right.' Carelessly he slipped the capsule and necklace into the pocket of his uniform jacket. 'You'll be hearing from me.'

'Thank you.' Her eyes filled with tears as he walked away.

It was a good hundred yards to the car. The few lamps cast only a feeble light in the village street.

Clairon looked around. The street was deserted.

He took out the capsule and weighed it thoughtfully in his hand. Then he dropped it on the pavement and crushed it underfoot.

Chapter Two

The man whose wife called herself 'Berger' sat at the table in his cell and read a book. He was of medium height and his earlier girth had been reduced during the past months to a more reasonable size. Two scars reaching from the hairline down to the eyebrow and from the cheek-bone straight across the upper lip, gave him a swashbuckling look which was deceptive. 'Berger' was anything but a warhorse. Of all the accused he was considered to have the most refined intellect and was the most enthusiastic user of the prison library.

He read whatever he could get hold of. Plato, Homer, Fontane, Rilke, Stefan Zweig and Franz Werfel. He read in order to numb himself.

But today he could not concentrate. He laid the book aside. His thoughts were with his wife. It was the 24th of December 1945 – Christmas Eve.

Would Henrike still respect him after she had heard of the enormity of the charges brought against him, an enormity which would not reach its full proportions until the Soviet general indictment, due to take place in a few weeks' time?

Was Henrike thinking kindly of him today? Or, horrified, did she prefer to thrust the fifteen years spent together out of her memory?

For fifteen years they had had a good marriage, marked by mutual understanding and mutual respect. Then suddenly, with the crushing indictment of the U.S. chief prosecutor Jackson, came darkness, horror, and unbearable shame. And Jackson was a man to whom he could even concede ideals, a man who, compared to the British, French and above all to the Russians, seemed to him like a lone figure crying in the wilderness.

He was ashamed of his acceptance of the inhuman treatment of Polish and Czech foreign workers, of his passive tolerance of the shooting of Russian prisoners-of-war, and of all the monstrous deeds he had known about, or at least should have known about, and which he had watched without the strength to act.

And he felt a burning shame for his powerlessness before Hitler.

He had seen him for the last time in the Führerbunker beneath the Reich Chancellery, six weeks before his death. Frank had been there with him. But before he could speak and explain the hopelessness of the situation to him, Hitler left the room without warning and without even greeting him.

Then Frank had taken him aside in the courtyard. Their conversation would remain in his memory for ever. Finally, but unfortunately too late, it had opened his eyes.

'Have you ever heard what Hitler calls mankind?' said Frank in a whisper.

'I've been his Minister for ten years,' he said, 'but I've never had the chance to talk to him about anything personal.'

'Planetary bacilli, that's what people are to him,' said Frank. 'Planetary bacilli! And do you know what he is to me? Mephistopheles!'

'Herr Frank,' he had replied, 'aren't you afraid that you might be saying this to the wrong person?'

'No,' said Frank, 'because ever since my conversion, I have finished with Hitler. With everything. Certainly, we all have something evil in us. But don't forget that there is always a Mephistopheles who brings it out. And that's how it is – Hitler is the devil.'

'Herr Frank!' He had looked round furtively.

'– and we are his miserable helpers,' Frank concluded, 'the helpers who make it possible for him to lead men astray, and drive them to madness.'

'Berger' stood up and walked restlessly up and down in his cell. Frank, the 'Butcher of Poland', kept going through his mind. Frank, the only one who now freely and openly indicted himself before the court.

A scraping sound came through the cell-door. The sentry in front of the peep-hole had changed. 'Berger' sat on the plank bed. Here I sit, he thought, the Minister of the Reich who at every opportunity boasted of his superiority over his colleagues, who controlled a large section of the economy, the merciless exploitation of the occupied regions, art treasures, precious materials and the fate of millions of people.

He saw himself once again in Mürwik near Flensburg. It was the 23rd of May that same year, a brilliantly beautiful spring day. Hitler had committed suicide on the 30th of April in Berlin. His will appointed Dönitz as the president of the Reich.

Dönitz was getting his 'ghost cabinet' together. As well as Speer, Schwerin von Krosigk and others, it also included 'Berger'. On the 23rd of May at about 11 a.m. this cabinet 'sat' in Mürwik for the last time. The British 2nd Army advanced into Flensburg. Schwerin-Krosigk, who was acting chancellor, explained a general plan to his 'cabinet members' without knowing the position of the British troops.

Suddenly British soldiers burst into the conference room. The gentlemen of the cabinet were dumbfounded. Only 'Berger' felt completely uninvolved. He watched the scene as though from a private box in the theatre.

The British gave the order, 'Trousers down!'

The gentlemen looked at one another aghast. But the soldiers were not joking. The men of the last German government of the Third Reich at last stood before them in their underpants.

Then they were searched for weapons and taken singly into an adjoining room. It was only there that 'Berger' finally grasped the situation. It was the end.

A British sergeant-major snapped at him: 'What's your name?'

'Berger' told him.

'And your rank?'

'Minister.'

'Take your underpants down!'

'Berger' obeyed.

'Bend over!'

'Berger' bent over. A strange hand touched his body.

'Shirt off!'

'Berger' did as he was instructed.

'Raise your arms! Mouth open! Head down!'

He could have told them beforehand: they would not find a poison capsule on him.

Later he learned that not far from him, in a washroom, with British soldiers standing guard, Admiral of the Fleet von Friedeburg had ended his life with potassium cyanide.

'Berger' forced his thoughts back to the Nuremberg cell, and his gaze found the peep-hole. The eyes of the sentry had disappeared. Was that anything to do with it being Christmas Eve?

'Berger' sat down at the table again, picked up the book, pushed it away again after a few moments and closed his eyes. He tried to pray.

... 'I am here,' said Steinbronn, 'to inform you of a planned conspiracy against the court.'

Clinton, toying with his fountain-pen, did not answer straight away. 'Cute,' he said at last, 'very cute. An S.S.-storm-troop commander who walks into an office of the American secret service and announces a conspiracy. That's really damn cute! And why should the S.S.-storm-troop commander do that?'

Steinbronn hesitated. 'Because I . . . would like to prevent unnecessary bloodshed. Because I am interested in justice. Because I always . . .'

' . . . Why does the S.S.-storm-troop commander betray his comrades?'

'They are not my comrades.'

'But why are you betraying this conspiracy? Let's have the truth!'

'Firstly because to me justice . . .'

' . . . And secondly?'

'I thought that perhaps I . . . That is, I might possibly have to stand in the foreseeable future before one of your courts myself. And I thought that perhaps I . . . that perhaps you would give me . . .'

'You thought I would give you a favourable recommendation. A wonderful piece of reasoning! For you. But not for me! Do you understand? Not for me!'

'I thought . . .' Steinbronn began again, his voice trailing off into a whisper, ' . . . I thought the matter would interest you.'

'What do you know about it?'

'Actually,' said Steinbronn, 'actually very little.'

'Very little?' Clinton was amused. 'Very little!' He laughed across to Joe.

'The light,' said Steinbronn and again held his hand in front of his eyes, 'it's bothering me.'

'Okay.' Clinton signalled to Joe to switch the lamps off. 'Thank you,' said Steinbronn, 'I couldn't think like that.'

'Then you can think all the clearer now. What do you know about this supposed conspiracy?'

'I overheard a conversation. Two men . . .'

'Where was this?'

'In Landshut.'

'Where exactly?'

'In a public house. I've forgotten the name unfortunately, but I would be able to find it again.'

'What were these two men talking about?'

'They were talking about some sort of plan. I heard them mention such things as "attack the court-room", and "hand-grenades", and "Kaltenbrunner, Frank and Schirach".'

'Is that all you heard?'

'That was all I could make out distinctly. The rest was a bit unclear.'

'Unclear?'

'What? Oh, yes. They were speaking softly and I couldn't understand properly because of the noise.'

'Is that all?'

'No. I then joined the conversation. I introduced myself as a storm-troop commander. Said how much I would welcome the action and so on.'

'How did the men react?'

'They were suspicious at first. Then they cross-examined me a bit. When they felt I was reliable they seemed ready to discuss things with me more openly.'

'And? Did they?'

'There was no opportunity. A third man appeared and led them off. He was in a hurry. Where he took them, I don't know.'

'Have you seen these two men again since then?'

'No. This was only the day before yesterday.'

'And what happened yesterday?'

'It took me two days to get from Landshut to Nuremberg. We Germans nowadays aren't allowed - I'm sorry, I mean there are no trains or buses, and of course no taxis.'

'So how did you get here?'

'Hitch-hiked. Just short stretches at a time. Mostly lorries. American ones too.'

'Can you describe the three men to us?'

'Yes. The younger one was about in his middle twenties. Perhaps older, it's so hard to tell these days. Let me think. Yes . . . full lips. Slight stature.'

'Colour of his hair?'

'Blond. A darkish blond.'

'Any special peculiarities?'

'If it is any help to you: the nail of his . . . ' he thought care-

fully, 'his right middle finger was strangely deformed. As though by a badly-healed wound.'

'And the other man?'

'The other was a good ten years older and he was the spokesman. Wavy hair. Thick. Grey-blond, a strange colour. Angular face. Yes.'

'No peculiarities?'

'No. At least, not that I noticed.'

'And the third one? The one who came for the other two?'

'I just saw him very fleetingly. Very tall. About my height. An infantry cloth coat. Grey hat.'

Clinton turned to Joe. Joe nodded; he had taken it all down in shorthand.

Clinton looked at Steinbronn 'Do you know any names?'

Steinbronn said: 'The name Karin was mentioned once and the younger of the two, the one with the deformed finger-nail, was addressed by the older at one point as "Ralf". I don't know if that's his real name.'

Clinton got up and stood for a while irresolutely at the window, as though gazing into the night sky would help him to make a decision. At last he gave Joe the familiar sign.

A few days of detention might loosen Steinbronn's tongue.

The Nurembergers had known horror in their lives only too well. And on the eve of 1946, with the best will in the world, they could not feel more than a distant respect for the trial in its present stage.

For those directly concerned in the proceedings, of course, this stage was one of the more decisive.

The introductory period was over. The prosecutors had built up the pieces of evidence into an unassailable argument. The defence had accustomed themselves to the foreign Anglo-Saxon law of the trial, and were ready to assert their new-won assurance. The judges were acquiring a clearer picture of the Third Reich and the accused. The defendants grew hour by hour more strongly aware of the seriousness of their position.

The journalists and observers realised that they had an extraordinary task to fulfil, that they were recording history.

Raoul Clairon had used the last days before the resumption of the proceedings to write down his thoughts on the course of the trial so far – separately from his commentaries, and openly and honestly with himself. The manuscript was not meant for

the public, and he kept it locked away in the safe.

Clinton Keen had interviewed Steinbronn several times, without any perceptible success. When he had a chance, he spent his evenings with Bob Hamnersmith in the mess. To escape the sentimentality of the holiday period, they plunged themselves into a discussion which lasted several days concerning the effect of the trial on coming generations. Nothing else had a chance against it. Neither Texarkana, nor baseball, and especially not 'Fräuleins'.

The U.S. chief prosecutor, Robert Houghwout Jackson, had flown to Paris, Tunis, Cairo, Athens and Luxor during the twelve-day pause in the hearings and had taken part in the Christmas service in Bethlehem. Now he was flying back to Nuremberg.

Henrike 'Berger' had travelled on Christmas Eve and the two days of Christmas from Burgfarnbach to Fürth and then on the tram to the Nuremberg law-courts. She had stood for hours by the iron railings and looked up at the windows in order to be close to her husband even though she knew that the prison area was on the other side of the building, away from the street.

The accused had passed the Christmas period in different ways.

Goering behaved in the same way as ever. He talked politics with the court psychologist G. M. Gilbert and elaborated on his self-confident philosophy. As a believer only in the self-interest of men and nations, Christmas had no significance for him.

Hjalmar Schacht appeared cheerful, as though the trial did not concern him. Christmas in jail was nothing to him but a freakish caprice of his long life. He completely brushed aside the charge that he had administered the financial policy that had made Hitler's rise possible, claiming the exact opposite. 'I tried to hold Hitler back.' On the other hand he regarded Goering as 'a born criminal', believing that 'stealing is in a sense worse than killing.'

The accused 'Berger' had been taking stock of himself in the peace of the Christmas period. Had he lived his life? Given it away? Misused it? Did his conscience not demand that he make reparations of some kind?

He sat in judgment on himself. Over and over again he considered in complete clarity the phases he had passed through in the service of Hitler. He racked his brains both to expose his guilt, and at the same time to find a way out of it.

Yet no matter how he tried, he could not erase the memory of what had taken place at Dubno.

Dubno belonged to Poland. 'Berger' only got to know the place from the back seat of his BMW, and even the next day, he could not remember if it had been a large or small town, or whether he had driven through it down the main street or along side-roads. All he knew was that Dubno lay on the edge of the Ukraine between Tenopol and Rovno, on a plateau near the Russian border.

His visit was concerned with the building of grain storage sheds on the former airfield: while making a routine stop in Lemberg he had been told of the severe delays in their construction. Since it was less than three hours by car to Dubno from Lemberg, he took the opportunity to get a picture of the condition of the sheds for himself.

As his BMW approached the building site, 'Berger' heard a volley of shots. He told the driver to pull up. Hearing a second volley, 'Berger' ordered his adjutant to come with him to investigate.

They came to a small ravine. Looking down, they watched as about one hundred people were forced by a few S.S.-men to undress. They were told to put their shoes, outer garments, underwear and the contents of their pockets all on separate piles.

Noticing the yellow stars on their outer garments, 'Berger' realised that they were Jews. The men, women and children followed the orders of the S.S.-men without resistance. They kissed one another and said farewell. Women took their children into their arms and held them close. One of the women who was holding a child of less than two years, rocked it, and the child laughed and kicked with delight.

A man held the hand of a boy of about six and spoke to him calmly. Apparently he was trying to explain the parting to him. His hand pointed to the sky. The boy nodded.

The S.S.-men forced the families apart, dividing the men from their wives and the women from their children, and herded a group of men behind an earth mound. Then the volleys rang out.

'Berger' began to feel sick. He went back to the car. In the site-office an S.S.-officer explained to him that the Jewish con-

centration camp prisoners had been responsible for the delays in building.

'Berger' said nothing. He asked no questions, and did not enquire whether children were also responsible for the building, or whether there had been a hearing before the court-martial. He did not even ask who had issued the order for the shootings.

He remained silent although he knew he had supreme authority over all workers in that region, and although he was responsible not only for the boosting and maintenance of the supply of labour, but also for the General Staff's use of the workers and the preservation of their capacity to work.

He drove away from Dubno and said nothing. He said nothing in Lemberg, and he said nothing in Berlin. He said nothing to Hitler, and he said nothing to Himmler and nothing to his colleagues either. He said nothing even to Henrike.

Only now had that silence entered his consciousness with its full force. In the isolation of his cell he reached a decision. He would speak out. He was ready, on his own initiative, to withdraw his plea of 'not guilty' before the court, and acknowledge his guilt.

On New Year's Day Dr. Vesenstedt would come to see him. He wanted to determine the strategy of his defence with him once more before the resumption of the trial, 'Berger' would take that opportunity to inform him of his decision.

Then, on New Year's Eve, he sat on his bed, folded his hands and prayed, for Henrike, for his victims, for their families and for himself. And he could pray again.

That evening there was a storm howling in the Hamburg district. It blew from the north-east, sweeping dust, small branches and rubbish along before it. On the lower Elbe, breakers slapped against the banks in a steady rhythm.

Not far from there ran the country road from Blankenese to Wedel. A little before Wedel, set back from the road, stood a house. It was not especially large, and the roof reached almost down to the ground, as though protecting the people inside from all dangers. This house belonged to Dr. Albert Kausen. Until just before the end of the war he had lived there alone with his wife Käthe. But when his daughter Ilse and her family in Altona had been bombed out, they took her, her husband Gebhard and their daughter Barbara in.

Albert Kausen was seventy-eight. He had retired from his

legal practice only three years ago, leaving it in the hands of his son-in-law Gebhard.

Dr. Gebhard Vesenstedt, who would be fifty-five in a week, had had the good fortune to go through the war without being called up. As the legal representative of a large Hamburg concern which was important to the war-effort, he was exempted from military service. He had been a member neither of the N.S.D.A.P. nor of any of its numerous offshoot organisations. This had caused him a lot of professional difficulties, but these were problems which his imperturbable temperament enabled him to overcome.

He was well aware that fate had been kind to him. Out of conflicts which had brought other colleagues dismissal, expulsion from their profession, or internment in a concentration camp, he had emerged more or less unscathed. At least on the outside.

Only his wife Ilse had known how much he had suffered under those times, and how he hated the Nazis to the very depths of his being.

When the British military authorities had put him on the list of lawyers from among whom the chief accused of the Third Reich could choose their defending counsel, he had gone to the officer in command of the city of Hamburg and asked for his name to be struck off the list. But the officer had overruled his objections. 'There are only two alternatives open to us,' he had told him. 'Either we select Nazi lawyers, or we select lawyers who were not Nazis. We have decided to take the second alternative.'

'Agreed,' Vesenstedt had replied, 'I will remain on the list. But neither as a Nazi nor as an opponent of the Nazis. Purely and simply as a lawyer.'

On New Year's Eve Vesenstedt stood by the window of his tiny office in Wedel. He gazed out into the storm without seeing it. At about the same time as 'Berger' in his cell in Nuremberg, he had also struggled through to a decision and one which he had not taken lightly.

His wife came into the room. 'Gebhard', she said quietly, as though not wishing to disturb him, 'the Englishman has arrived with the car. He says he is late. If you want to be in Nuremberg by tomorrow afternoon, every minute counts.' Vesenstedt turned away from the window. 'Please tell the driver that I am not coming with him.'

'You are not going . . ?'

His wife was bewildered.

'No,' he said calmly, 'I am withdrawing from the defence.'

Ilse Vesenstedt had already noticed how ill at ease her husband was when he came home from Nuremberg two days before Christmas Eve. She had blamed it on the strain of the unfamiliar way of working and the frightful situation in Nuremberg in general.

But when his uneasiness did not diminish even after the holidays, she pressed her husband's coat into his hands and went for a walk with him beside the Elbe.

Ilse Vesenstedt had an infallible instinct for her husband's need. On this cold, dry December afternoon she knew she must encourage him to talk to her.

'There are still five days until New Year, Gebhard,' she began, taking his arm. 'You should use them to get your mind on something else.'

'Ilse, I have three problems. They cannot be reconciled, and I can see no way out.'

'The first problem?'

'The first problem is purely juridical. One of International Law. The trial in Nuremberg is based on a law which was made by the prosecuting nations only after they had arrested the accused. Afterwards, you see. Not while the accused were committing their acts, or *before* they had committed their acts.'

'Is that allowed?'

'It depends wholly on the power wielded by the victors.'

'And what have you done about it?'

'Ilse, you don't understand my position. You fail to understand the whole proceeding. Yes, all the lawyers of the defence submitted to the court a declaration that we had composed together. We made the point that the judges have only been drawn from one side of the belligerent parties, namely the side of the victors, the side which not only set up the court, but also determined the rules of the penal code. And the rules were determined after the event! So the victors are simultaneously judges and prosecutors! A slap in the face for justice!'

'And how did the court react to that?'

'It simply had the declaration included among the documents. It was not allowed to be read out.'

'But somebody must have responded to your declaration?'

'Only Jackson. He is the chief prosecutor for the United States. He rejected the International Law of 1939 as a 'worthless doctrine'. He referred to the Briand-Kellogg Pact of 1928, the Geneva Protocol of 1924, a decision of the League of Nations in 1927 and the 6th Pan-American Conference.'

'Do these references answer the point?'

'From the Allied point of view, yes. From the German point of view, no. But I must admit, Jackson did argue the problem of the laws made after the event very well. He is an idealist. A pure idealist. It's an irreproachable characteristic, but it's of no use to a lawyer. He put forward the view that the Law of Nature was sufficient legal basis. And he was obviously sincere in what he said: "We must never forget that the record on which we judge these defendants today is the record history will judge us by tomorrow." ' Vesenstedt stood for a moment. 'I have committed that sentence to memory, word for word.'

'And your second problem?' Ilse asked quietly.

'My second problem arises from my purely personal attitude. I was never a Nazi, but I was never a resistance fighter either. My problem is that I am more on the side of the court, more on the side of these inadequate laws drawn up after the event. I condemn my own client, but not only in the way I would condemn a common murderer. I condemn him down to the very deepest core of my humanity.'

'Then I don't have to ask about your third problem.'

'No, God knows you don't. The lawyer who opposes the newly-created law is compelled by his moral feelings to take the side of the prosecution and is supposed to save his client from the gallows for reasons of professional ethics! No - !' He shook his head. 'No, no good can possibly come of that.'

They had arrived in front of the house.

'Have you spoken to Barbara about this yet?' asked Ilse.

'No,' he said, 'there wasn't enough time in Nuremberg. And I wanted to deal with it here myself first.'

'Did Barbara help you?' His daughter had been assisting him in Nuremberg as his secretary.

'Yes,' he said softly, 'yes, she did.'

And now, on New Year's Eve, Gebhard and Ilse were in the little office.

'It's been a long time since we discussed it, Gebhard,' she said, scarcely audibly, 'but when we talked about it last time -

wasn't it after your father's funeral? – we both unreservedly declared our faith in Christianity, in our religion.'

'I have faith in it still. Now more than ever.'

'Then I beg of you, answer me just one question. Without reservation.'

'I know what you are after. It's pointless, Ilse, you must see that.'

'Would you, as a Catholic priest, refuse extreme unction to a dying man?'

'Ilse, believe me, it is useless –'

'Please, answer my question.'

'My decision indirectly answers your question. Please understand.'

'I want to hear the answer from your own lips, Gebhard, word for word. Would you, as a Catholic priest refuse a criminal . . . Would you not allow a criminal any word of spiritual comfort? Would you deny him any kind of medical help as a doctor?'

'Ilse, please – I'

They were interrupted by the appearance of Barbara. She was ready for the journey. Her severe hair style made her look considerably older than her twenty-two years.

She looked from one to the other in surprise. 'I've been looking for you all over the house. The Englishman says we must hurry.'

Essenbach was a small, insignificant town in the neighbourhood of Landshut, comprising a town hall, a school, two churches and several inns. The people were of the old Lower Bavarian type. They did not talk much and did not bother about politics or the issues of world history. The war had passed Essenbach by.

In the last days of the war, however, Essenbach, like all the towns of Lower Bavaria, had been flooded with refugees from the northern part of Germany. Most of them settled there for years to come, many of them for ever. Essenbach was startled out of its peacefulness.

The natives regarded the outsiders with suspicion. One of these outsiders was a young man from Berlin by the name of Werner Ruland. Since he had studied meteorology, he had been exempted military service.

His parents and both his brothers had been killed in an air raid. All that was left of the family was his sister, one year

younger than himself. Here they found shelter on a farm.

One day a U.S. lieutenant noticed Karin. He disregarded the ban on fraternisation, so risking demotion. He had fallen in love with her.

From then on Werner and she were able to enjoy American military supplies: peanut butter, white bread, real coffee, Lucky Strikes and chocolate.

In October the lieutenant took Karin along on a trip to Munich. He had some business to take care of at the headquarters of the military authorities. That was when she met Raoul Clairon.

When she mentioned in conversation that she knew shorthand and could type, he asked her spontaneously whether she would like to be his secretary for the duration of the trial in Nuremberg.

Werner had nothing against it. On the contrary, he saw what an exceptional chance she was being offered. Just a week later the military authorities delivered their certificate of acceptability. Clairon had eased its passage.

At the beginning of November, Kretschmer had collected her. Since then she had been in Nuremberg and had not seen anything more of her brother. Now, during her Christmas leave, their pleasure at being together again was all the greater.

The day of her return had come, and Werner was leading her to the horse paddock. 'Sweetheart, you could do me a favour.' There was nothing in his voice to hint at the urgency of his request.

'Anything you ask, Werner, you know that.'

'A favour to do with your boss.'

'With Clairon?' She turned away from the horse.

'Yes. There's a girl I know. Her name's Gisela. Gisela Silinski. She's mad keen to find out at first hand what it's like to work as a secretary at the trial.'

'A reporter?'

'No, a secretary like you. Maybe not quite so pretty. Four years older than me. Thirty. Very attractive, with reddish-brown hair.'

She interrupted him. 'Why are you telling me all this? So I can build her up to Clairon?'

'Maybe.'

'He only goes for blondes.'

'Seriously, sweetheart. Gisela wants to take over your job for a few days.'

'What - ?' She stared at him wide-eyed.

'Is that so strange? A lot of girls would like to play at being a secretary in Nuremberg. They just don't know the right people. But I'm your brother. And you know Clairon.'

'What are you talking about? Now? In the middle of the trial! It's a crazy idea. Clairon would never agree to it. He's not even allowed to. I'm familiar with the work. And just because a girl takes it into her head : . . '

'But it's not just - !' He held his breath. He had almost made a slip.

'Then what is it?'

'Oh, nothing. Something private.' He wondered whether Karin had noticed that he was lying to her. That he had to lie to her in order to keep her from danger.

'I'm sorry Werner, for you. But you do understand, don't you? It's pointless to go to Clairon with a request like that.'

'You don't have to ask Clairon.' He looked up across the paddock.

'That's all right then.'

'You can just present him with a *fait accompli*.'

'I can do *what*?' Her voice wavered.

'It will be quite easy, believe me. You fall ill suddenly - overnight. A circulatory disorder or something like that. You let Clairon know. And at the same time you tell him that you have found him a replacement, a first-class and exceptionally attractive one, who knows the ropes at Nuremberg inside out. Well, then after a few days you come back.'

'Werner, you're not serious?'

'Why not? The only way to deal with the Yanks is to use a bit of imagination, isn't that right?' He put his arm around her and squeezed playfully.

She pulled away: 'But surely you don't believe that Clairon would agree to something like that?'

'As far as I can see it is the only chance Gisela has.'

'Does she really mean that much to you?'

'Yes,' he said, in a firm voice.

'All right, then,' she said, 'I'll help you. When?'

'There's plenty of time. Depends when Gisela can manage it. I just wanted you to agree beforehand. I'll let you know well in advance.'

They went back to the house. 'Are you satisfied now?' she asked.

'Yes,' he said, turning his face away from her. How nice, she thought, this is the first time that Werner has been seriously in love with a girl.

If she had had any idea that Werner did not know the girl at all, she would have despaired of him. If she had known about the visit of a young man in Essenbach whose nail on the right middle-finger was curiously deformed . . .

. . . it was the 20th of December, one day before Karin's visit to Werner Ruland. Werner was just throwing the potato peelings into the pig trough when he heard a noise behind him.

In the half-light of the sty loomed the silhouette of a man. His German army great-coat reached down to his ankles. 'Do you still recognise me?'

'Hey, Ralf, is it really you?'

'Yes, it's me.'

'Ralf, old friend, where did you spring from?'

For the length of one heartbeat they stood speechless facing one another. Then they flung their arms around each other, two old schoolfriends overjoyed at seeing one another again.

Werner set the half bottle of red wine the farmer had given him on the table in his room, and they toasted their Berlin days. They had not seen each other for eight years. Now they sat opposite one another looking as though they were from different worlds: Werner Ruland, in his coarse linen farmer's smock, was already restored to his full health; Ralf Schilling, in a thread-bare uniform jacket with the facings and badges removed, looked thin, with deep-set, flickering eyes.

The twilight was already drawing in when Ralf began to talk about the real reason for his visit.

'Werner, I heard about you. But this chance fitted perfectly into my plans, or rather into our plans.'

'Ours? Who do you mean?'

'Our organisation. Waffen-S.S.'

'You were in the Waffen-S.S.?'

'Let's say I made contact with them. In the last year of the war.'

'And what's that got to do with me? You know, I could never work up much enthusiasm for that Nazi stuff.'

'Yes, I know. But you also know I was a group-leader of the Hitler Youth.'

'That's news to me.' Werner got up, wanting to end the conversation.

'And I'll be happy to explain what that's got to do with you. You must listen carefully.' His tone was suddenly cool and detached, and Werner felt himself somehow at a disadvantage.

In the last weeks of the war Ralf Schilling had commanded a unit of Hitler Youth who were detailed to defend the so-called Alpine Redoubt, together with the remains of the 17th S.S.-Division, a former elite corps.

The war ended for him in the neighbourhood of Rosenheim. With some of the S.S.-leaders he made his way through to Munich, where they went underground in order to avoid arrest by the Americans. Living off the black market, little by little they set up an illegal organisation of former members of the Waffen-S.S. Bomb attacks on American billets and sabotage of electric power-stations and reservoirs were planned.

The Americans had got wind of it, however, and were able to break the organisation up. Except for the hard core, which, in the last few weeks, had been expanded into a network covering all four zones of occupation.

'The goal of the new organisation is,' said Schilling expansively - 'let's put it gently - to influence the Nuremberg Trial.'

'You're crazy,' said Werner Ruland, and was startled by his own hushed, unfamiliar-sounding voice.

'You're entitled to call us that if you wish,' said Ralf Schilling, 'but one of these days even you will come to see that we have acted for the sake of Germany.' He stood up and went over to the little window. 'And for Germany no risk is too great!' With a swift movement he wheeled round. 'Make no mistake about this: we are playing for keeps! Anyone that stands in our way is condemned to death!'

'You were going to tell me what this has got to do with me,' said Werner, smiling. Ralf Schilling's stories seemed like the products of a sick mind, and Werner could hardly take them seriously.

'I was in Nuremberg to reconnoitre the terrain,' said Schilling calmly, 'when I saw Karin. A few days later I found out where she worked in the law-courts, where she lived, who she sees, all about Clairon and the whole bag of tricks. I've come to

you with a simple request. All you have to do is persuade Karin to go off sick.'

'Insane!'

'But if you refuse or tell anyone about it, I wouldn't give Karin another three days.' He reached down into the pocket of his big, worn army great-coat and held a Mauser under Werner's nose. 'We were able to clean out a depot of the S.S.-division "Flanders" that the Yanks forgot. Shall I go on?'

'No,' said Werner tonelessly.

Then Ralf Schilling told him about the girl called Gisela Silinski.

Chapter Three

The Counter Intelligence Corps was set up at the beginning of 1942 and was attached to the army. It was composed both of civilians and members of the armed forces.

The C.I.C. headquarters in Germany was in Oberursel, near Frankfurt am Main. The interrogation of leading National Socialists also took place there.

The U.S. zone of occupation was divided into 7 C.I.C. regions: Hesse, North Baden-North Württemberg, Bremen, Berlin, Upper Bavaria-Swabia, Lower Bavaria-Upper Palatinate and Franconia.

The headquarters of Region Number 6 was in Bamberg. The Nuremberg C.I.C. was a subsidiary office of it. Nevertheless, Clinton Keen felt he was his own boss and like a sort of 'founding member'.

Clinton's father, one Andreas Scharf, came originally from the Nuremberg suburb of Buchenbühl. He had emigrated to the States at the age of 21. After a few years he considered himself an American and changed his name to 'Keen'. Having risen to the position of manager of a bread factory at the age of twenty-nine, he married Millicent Howler, the proprietor's daughter. They had three sons. Clinton was the youngest. When he learned that his father had come from Germany, he was filled with an insatiable interest in that country and its people. He was excited about everything he could find out on the subject.

When he was twenty he met his German grandparents, who came on a visit to Texarkana. He adored them from the very first moment. After they had returned to Germany, he kept up a lively correspondence with them. He studied German at the University of Dallas. Seven years after his grandparents' return, on the 11th of March 1937, a letter arrived with a Rotterdam postmark. The letter was from friends of his grandparents. They were dead. They had been beaten up and had died in one of Hitler's camps for political dissidents, near a place called Papenburg.

From that day on, Clinton hated the Germans. He swore to himself that he would make that hatred felt wherever he found the opportunity.

On the 11th of December 1941 Hitler declared war on the United States. On that same day, Clinton volunteered to join the army. His knowledge of German and frequent requests to be allowed to serve in Europe resulted in his being assigned to the C.I.C. after a short period of basic training. From October 1942 he worked within the group of German specialists concerned with information about Nuremberg.

Now, on the last day of the year 1945, Clinton was in his BMW 328 on his way to spend the evening with Bob Hammersmith. All at once he was overcome with a sense of doubt.

At the Laufertorgraben he stopped. Had he been blinded by his hatred of the Germans in the way he had dealt with Steinbronn? Could he, in the bottomless depth of his hostility, no longer think and act clearly? Did it not make him forget the proper running of his office? Did he have the right to lock Steinbronn up without immediately investigating his statement?

Clinton could not shake off the sense that in the blind fury of his loathing for everything German, he had made a mistake.

With an abrupt movement he changed into first gear, pulled the BMW round and instead of driving to Bob, returned to his office. By the time the thin peals of the brick-built church's bells were heard ringing in the New Year, Joe had found the man needed for Clinton's plan: Richard Billsteiner, a German detective from the period before 1933. Joe explained the situation to him.

Clinton had Steinbronn brought up to the interrogation room. Billsteiner watched him through the peep-hole from Joe's office.

Harald Erich Steinbronn had lost nothing of his self-assurance. Just as before, he greeted Clinton with a precise military bow. His chin was raised, the expression of his hawk-like face was impenetrable, and his voice rang out as though he were on the barrack-square.

Clinton sat on the edge of his desk and stretched his long legs out in front of him. As though to introduce what he was going to say, he ran his outspread fingers through his hair, 'Steinbronn, I'm letting you go.'

'Thank you.'

'But only conditionally. What do you people say? On your word of honour.'

'Does that mean that I'm not allowed to leave Nuremberg . . . ?'

'On the contrary. It means that you must leave Nuremberg, and that we're going to take you discreetly back to Landshut. In Landshut you'll make contact with one of your three supposed conspirators and you'll pass on all you discover about them to us. You will, as it were, be working for us.'

Steinbronn considered. 'And you trust me?'

'No, I don't. You will remain under constant surveillance by one of our men. He won't let you out of his sight.'

'That's too dangerous.'

'Don't you worry. The man will keep in the background. Even you won't know who he is.'

'But what if I discover him, eliminate him and then escape?'

'You couldn't,' said Clinton, his voice hard. 'You'd never get out of Landshut. You'd be a dead man. Quite apart from that,' he added, 'we not only want something from you, but you also want a whole lot from us.'

'Can I take that to mean that if I perform some good work I'll be given a written declaration to that effect?'

'What it means is that we'll be able to discuss it.'

'And if I don't succeed in finding the men?'

'You will find one of them. One, or perhaps even all three. Don't worry about that. Freedom of movement for Germans is not all that great.' Silently he added a 'thank God'.

'Very well,' said Steinbronn, straightening his upper body, 'I'll do my utmost.'

'You'll be taken to Landshut tonight and dropped at the suburb of Achdorf. There's a guest-house there called The Customs House, which is where you'll take up your quarters.'

'And if I can't get a room?'

'That's all taken care of. You'll appear under your own name and your former rank.'

'What am I going to live on?'

'You will be given money. If anyone asks you about it, explain it as financial support from a large illegal Nazi organisation.'

'How do I get into contact with you?'

'Landshut's largest church is the Church of St. Martin. It's not too badly damaged. If you go into the church through the first side-entrance off Church Lane, you'll find a niche on the

left beside the entrance. In this niche there is a double confessional. The board of the knee-rail in the right-hand confessional is loose. Your post-box is under that board. Put all your reports in there. The post-box is cleared three times a day. You will be given our orders by way of your quarters.'

'How much time are you giving me?'

'A week. If you can't report any success within one week, we'll most likely have you brought back here. That's all you need to know.'

'I have just one more question,' said Steinbronn, and a fleeting smile played around the corner of his mouth, 'how is it possible for you to give me such detailed instructions? About the church, for example?'

'But Storm-Troop Commander!' Clinton laughed, 'the C.I.C. exists even in Landshut. And surely, you used to use dead-drop post-boxes all over the world. Or am I mistaken?'

'I'm sorry,' said Steinbronn, embarrassed. He realised that he had been stupid. He wondered if this C.I.C. agent would still believe he was an S.S.-storm-troop commander now.

The question did not occur to Clinton. Whether Steinbronn had indeed worked in the Reich Central Security Section or somewhere else was irrelevant for the moment. He was using him only as a decoy. A decoy who, without knowing it, would be gambling with his life.

The British sergeant pulled the Humber staff-car over to the side of the road. He turned half-way to the passengers sitting in the back.

'It's the battery!'

'What can we do?' Vesenstedt's question was directed both to the driver and his daughter Barbara, who was sitting next to him.

'I'll see if I can chase up a battery somewhere,' said the sergeant, and he stepped out into the dark night.

'Have you any idea where we are?' Vesenstedt asked his daughter.

'If I'm not mistaken, I saw a sign a little way back saying "Elze".'

'Elze,' said Vesenstedt, 'then we must already be a good bit past Hannover.' He turned up the collar of his coat and huddled into the corner of the car to ward off the cold.

It was just after 3 o'clock in the morning. Ilse would cer-

tainly be fast asleep by now. He wondered whether she had agreed with his head-over-heels change of decision. Or did she now, after all these years, think of him as a man without principles? He looked across at Barbara. He tried to penetrate the darkness, to look into her eyes, but he could not.

If it had not been for Barbara he would not now be sitting in the cold dark night in a car with no driver and a flat battery, on a lonely road in the neighbourhood of Elze. If Barbara had not persuaded him, he would certainly not have been prepared to make another trip to Nuremberg.

Barbara had been astonished when he made no move towards going with her to the car.

'I'm staying,' he had said, 'I am withdrawing from the defence.'

And then the discussion with her had begun. In the end he had to give way to her final argument. 'You must see,' she had said, 'this is not only a trial of the chief defendants, but also of the organisations they represent. The verdicts in this trial also apply to those who belonged to the organisations indicted with the defendants. Can you really take it on your conscience to abandon thousands, or probably even hundreds of thousands of people you do not know, simply because you feel a perfectly justified revulsion towards your client? Shouldn't you rather think of yourself as defending the organisations which are accused together with your client - defending those who, in the sense of the indictment, innocently belonged to them?'

That had turned the scale.

Dr. Gebhard Vesenstedt had set out on the return journey to Nuremberg.

They remained stuck for almost an hour. In that time only one English truck had passed by and had lit up the scene inside the Humber staff-car with its headlights.

Vesenstedt turned to Barbara. 'Are you asleep?'

'No,' her voice came through the darkness, 'I'm thinking. I'm wondering whether any of the accused has a chance of escaping the gallows. They have to expect the hangman, don't they?'

'Yes,' he said, 'I don't think they'll be granted a military execution.'

'Which of them do you think has a chance? Goering maybe? Or Frank? Do you think there's one of them who will be spared? Dönitz? Raeder? Schirach? Speer?'

'Well, I don't regard the trial as a collective indictment. Even

if the facts presented by the prosecution up till now do often tend to make one take that view.'

'All right. Let's take Goering. What chance has he?'

'I can't read the minds of the court. In my opinion he has no chance at all. He not only bore a great deal of responsibility, but he is steeped as much as ever in the fatal spirit of this catastrophe.'

'Did he really play such a large part in the crimes?'

'Simply through his rank he helped to lead the people astray. And that responsibility is a very heavy one.'

'And Schacht? Did Schacht also lead the people astray, then?'

'The situation is quite different with Schacht. There are those who say he does not belong in the dock at all. Then there are others who say he was the root-cause of all the evil. Without money, as is well known, the finest revolution will collapse.'

'But Schacht parted company with Hitler quite early on.'

'Yes, but he stands for German big capital. In the same way as Schirach stands for the Hitler Youth, even though he became the Gauleiter of Vienna a long time ago. And Fritzsche for Goebbels. Or Kaltenbrunner for the S.S., although for a long time his influence in it was not as great as that of Himmler, Heydrich or, say, Müller as head of the Gestapo.'

'But Kaltenbrunner was head of the Reich Central Security Section, the Security Police and the S.D.'

'The Reich Central Security Section was only set up in 1939. It administered various departments such as the Gestapo, Kripo, investigation of opinions, and the S.D.'

'Is that supposed to excuse Kaltenbrunner?'

'No, by no means. All I'm saying is that as well as Schacht there are others among the accused who *stand* for something, though in fact there are other men who could stand for it equally well.'

'Who do you think has a chance, then? Is there anyone who can escape the gallows? Apart from Ley?'

'Apart from Ley,' he said thoughtfully, 'perhaps you are right.'

He remembered what he had heard from a colleague in Nuremberg.

It was the 25th of October 1945, a few weeks before the opening of the trial. The bill of indictment was presented to the

accused. They were already in their individual cells, where they were ultimately to spend twelve months almost to the day.

Dr. Robert Ley, former leader of the German Labour Front and Reich organising head of the N.S.D.A.P., was the only one of the accused to undergo a mental breakdown after learning the content of the indictment.

He was wearing felt slippers and a U.S. battledress. His former plump-cheeked look was completely gone. Small, with just the slightest suggestion of a pot-belly, he paced up and down in his cell like a ghost.

The court psychologist came to see him and offered him a copy of the bill of indictment. Like all the other accused, Ley was ordered to write down his first, spontaneous response to it. Like Raeder, Ley refused.

'How am I supposed to defend myself for crimes when I didn't know anything?' he screamed. The emotion brought out his old speech impediment again. 'Line us up against the wall and shoot us!' he shouted in an unsteady voice. 'But why should I be dragged before a court like a - like a ...'

He shrank back into himself. The word 'criminal' would not pass his lips. He looked like a tormented beast. Just a few days beforehand he had committed his political thoughts to paper. First: Germany must become a part of the United States. Second: America should adopt for itself a National Socialism purified of antisemitism, and thereby ensure its leading role in the world.

Third: Dr. Robert Ley should be entrusted with the task of carrying this plan through and be given a staff of people to work with him so that he could direct the operation from the Nuremberg prison.

In addition he wrote an application to Henry Ford. As the organiser of the Volkswagen factory, he wanted to engage himself in the American automobile industry as soon as the trial was over.

But now, on the evening of the 25th of October 1945, the court psychologist had locked the door behind him. Ley was alone. As before, he walked restlessly up and down. The sentry asked him through the peep-hole why he didn't go to sleep.

'Sleep?' shouted Ley. 'Millions of forced labourers - my God - millions of Jews - all killed - murdered - all murdered - how am I supposed to sleep?'

Half an hour later he had hanged himself.

The sentry and a mastersergeant with two G.I.s found Ley bent forward beside the toilet seat. He had torn the zip fastener out of his battledress and tied it to the flush-handle on the water-pipe. At the end of the zip he had attached a noose made of strips of an army towel. His mouth, nose and ears had been stopped up with torn-up shreds of his underpants.

The German prison doctor Dr. Ludwig Pflücker and the dentist Dr. Heinz Hoch arrived. Pflücker gave Ley an injection of one cubic centimetre of cardiazol and one of one cubic centimetre of lobulin. Hoch began efforts to resuscitate him.

But Ley was dead.

'Yes,' said Vesenstedt to his daughter in the darkness, 'probably Ley is the only one who will escape the gallows.'

'You mean they might still hang him symbolically?' Barbara's voice was scarcely audible.

'Anything is possible. No one knows what will come at the end of this trial.'

'Is Krupp any better off in that way?'

'Because he has been certified unfit to stand? I don't know. I only know one thing: Hitler, Himmler, Bormann and Goebbels would not have stood the slightest chance before this court.'

A car stopped. The British sergeant came back with a battery and the journey continued.

Wet snow was falling. At about eight o'clock in the evening Vesenstedt and his daughter found themselves back in their Nuremberg quarters. Their faces and hands were blue with cold.

Karin Ruland lay in her bed. She had kept her underwear, stockings and pullover on, pulled up the blanket to her chin, and was staring at the wall from which broad strips of plaster were peeling away.

The room belonged to one of the buildings requisitioned by the Americans. It was narrow, high-ceilinged and cold. The only window was at the front and had been patched up in a rough and ready way with boards and cardboard. If Karin wanted to let a little daylight into the room she had to open one of the casements. Otherwise she made do with the electric light on the ceiling – like now.

Her thoughts gave her no peace. Since her return from Essenbach she could not get them out of her head.

Well, she had given Werner her assent. But did she necessarily have to keep to it? Couldn't she still back out? Just behave as though she had never discussed the matter with him?

What kind of a girl could this Gisela Silinski be? Thirty and attractive; and very keen to play at being a secretary at the Nuremberg trial. A secretary for three, four days. What rubbish!

Or was there something more? A cunning trick? Then there was Werner too. He would not get involved with anything like that. But what if he did not know anything about it? What if this Silinski girl had pulled the wool over his eyes too? Pretty eyes and a bit extra could get any man running in circles these days. Why not Werner as well? He had seemed very upset as he saw her off. His voice had sounded quite different from usual.

Karin found no answers. She stared into nothingness.

About 100 miles away from Karin, Werner Ruland sat at his table in Essenbach. In the flickering light of a 'Hindenburg lamp' he was trying to write a letter. The page in front of him was covered with crossed-out lines.

At first he had wanted to make a complete confession, telling Karin about the visit of Ralf Schilling, about the illegal S.S.-organisation. But how did he know the letter would not be censored? Perhaps he might get Karin into a great deal of trouble through it?

Then he wrote a sort of apology, retracting his request to her and his over-hasty thinking – but then he crossed it out again.

He put the blame on Gisela Silinski, the girl he did not know, and crossed that through straight away.

He wanted to release Karin from her acceptance of the idea, allow her to reconsider the decision in peace and quiet. He even wanted to suggest to her that she give up her job and try to leave Germany with him and settle somewhere in some distant country.

He rested his head in his hands and could not make up his mind. Then he stood up, undressed, blew out the tallow candle and lay down on his bed. At four o'clock in the morning he would have to attend to the cattle.

He determined to leave the letter unwritten and tell Karin the truth when he saw her next.

He was not to know that for him and Karin there would be no next time.

Wednesday, the 2nd of January 1946. Once again the eyes of the world were turned towards Nuremberg.

Above the city, as for days before, there stretched an oppressive Föhn sky.

Gebhard Vesenstedt had set his alarm clock for six o'clock. The two rooms which he and his daughter occupied were in no way different from that of Karin Ruland. They had been requisitioned by the Americans, had boards and cardboard over the windows instead of glass, and were miserably cold. He rose, slipped his winter coat over his shoulders, and went quietly through the room where Barbara slept, out on to the landing and into the ice-cold bathroom.

He switched on the 40-watt ceiling light, shaved without taking off his coat, rinsed the rest of the foam from his face, washed his hands with the piece of K.D. unity soap which his wife had given him for Christmas along with other similar little things, went back into Barbara's room and woke her up.

'Is it eight already?' She was still half-asleep and spoke with her eyes closed.

'No,' he said gently, 'twenty past six. I only wanted to tell you that I've decided to take the first tram to Fürth.'

'What are you doing in Fürth?' She pushed back the blanket from her face.

'There's a trolley that sometimes runs from Fürth to Burgfarnbach at this time of day.'

'A trolley?'

'To check the rails. With a bit of luck it will be going today too.'

'You're going to see "Berger's" wife?' She opened her eyes. 'At half past six in the morning?'

'Yes,' he said quietly so as not to shock her completely out of her sleep, 'I have a bit of a bad conscience. I promised I'd pass on her Christmas greetings to her husband. I wasn't able to do it, and so I would at least like to, on the first day – you understand?' And then, as though as an apology, he added: 'It doesn't change my opinion of him in any way. But after all, it's not the woman's fault.'

'And the opening of the trial?' Barbara half-raised her head.

'I'll be back in Nuremberg well before ten. With my charm as a hitch-hiker . . . ' He gave her a quick kiss on the cheek, and she fell asleep again.

He caught the first tram and the trolley too, and after a chilly

journey he arrived in Burgfarrnbach at about eight. Henrike 'Berger' gave the impression she had been expecting him. When she received him she was dressed, fresh and with her hair done, and the room had been tidied.

'Since I have been here in Burgfarrnbach,' she said, gesturing him to take a seat, 'I always get up at the crack of dawn. I prefer to keep myself busy than lie in bed awake.'

He told her briefly about his journey to Hamburg and then, without preamble, they began to talk about her husband.

'We must wait and see,' he reassured her, without feeling the slightest sympathy for the man's fate. 'Up till now we have only heard the American charges. Some time around the middle of January the French will begin, and that won't be quite so bad for your husband.'

'But the Russians,' she said, her hands trembling.

'Yes,' he replied calmly, 'the Russian ones – they might well give us a little more to cope with. But then we still don't know what tactics the Russians will adopt. Whether they'll go into details like the Americans or whether they'll produce a more general collective indictment of Germany.'

She gave him a letter. 'I've written all my thoughts down for my husband.' He wanted to interrupt her, but she motioned with her hand to restrain him. 'I know you can't give him the letter. But perhaps you can read it to him. And if there's too little time, then at least perhaps you could give him a summary of it. Do you think you'll have an opportunity to read the letter before you speak to my husband?'

'I promise you I will.'

'Thank you,' she said, 'I felt from the very beginning that with you the destiny of my husband was in good hands. He couldn't wish for a better defending counsel.'

Vesenstedt stared down at the floor. He felt as though she had given him a slap in the face. His narrow mouth tightened into a line, and his cheek bones stood out even more prominently than usual. He had to take a grip on himself; he could not show the woman who looked at him with such faith how much he despised her husband, how absolutely he condemned him.

'There's no need to thank me,' he said, and it sounded to him as though the words came from somewhere far away, 'I'm only doing my duty.' Then he got up. 'You understand, I'm in a hurry.'

Clinton Keen was also up unusually early by his standards. He had taken it into his head to talk to Clairon's new secretary, Karin, before she went back to her work. Every day between Christmas and New Year he had driven straight across the city to Rothenburg Street and had asked at number 56 for Karin Ruland. And every day he was told she was not back yet from her trip to her brother.

The 'Steinbronn' business bothered him a good deal more than he cared to admit to himself. His report to the office in Bamberg was overdue. He had to send it after Steinbronn's stay in Landshut was over at the very latest. The secretary Karin Ruland was the single, tiny lead she might perhaps help him to find another clue and not be solely dependent on Steinbronn's success.

A little before eight, just as on the previous days, Clinton pushed his lanky body through the high door of number 56, Rothenburg Street, and pressed the brass bell-push of the right-hand ground-floor apartment.

Today he was in luck. Karin Ruland opened the door herself. She was one of those girls whom he dismissed as 'typically German': short blonde hair, and a roundish blonde face. Her whole figure reeked of blonde.

He looked her up and down appraisingly. No doubt her character was blonde too.

'I'm an acquaintance of Mr. Clairon's.'

'I thought as much,' she said, and smiled at him in a friendly way. 'I don't know anybody here in Nuremberg besides Mr. Clairon. But won't you come in? You've tried here several times before, haven't you?'

'Yes,' he said, 'though actually it's about a completely unimportant matter.'

'Oh well,' she laughed at him quite openly, 'I'm sure it's not as unimportant as all that.'

Without being able to do anything about it, he was momentarily embarrassed. It irritated him, and he felt caught out. Karin took no notice. She brought up a chair for him and cleared away her coffee cup. 'Nescafé,' she said. 'I get it now and then from Mr. Clairon.'

Clinton was grateful for the change of subject. He could have kicked himself for behaving so idiotically in front of the German girl.

'Does Mr. Clairon ever give you anything else besides Nescafé?'

'Not really. When he's in a good mood, maybe a Camel or a Lucky Strike.' She glanced at the sideboard as though looking for proof.

'What puts him in a good mood?' He noticed how easy she was to talk to.

'Oh,' she said, with a dismissive gesture, 'that depends entirely on his girl friends.'

'Aren't you one of them?'

'No, believe it or not. Do you usually walk into strange girls' rooms in broad daylight to ask questions like that?'

'No. I'd like to ask you something different.'

'Okay,' she said.

'Has anything unusual happened to you recently?'

'Are you from the C.I.C.?' She looked suspiciously at his sloppy dark-blue suit and his white open-necked shirt.

'You haven't answered my question,' he said, realising that there was no point in beating about the bush.

'All right,' she said, 'I'll answer your question. But you have to answer mine too.'

'Okay,' he admitted, 'I am from the C.I.C. And now you answer my question. Has anything unusual happened to you recently?'

'No.'

'Have strangers tried to make contact with you?'

'No.'

'Have you overheard any suspicious conversations in your neighbourhood?'

'No.'

'Has anybody recently asked you any peculiar questions or made any peculiar proposals?'

'No.'

'Do you know a man called Ralf?'

'No.'

Without realising it, his last question brought him very close to the whole 'Steinbronn' problem. So near, in fact, that it would probably have been a simple matter for him to lay bare the conspiracy which he still did not fully believe in, at a single stroke.

'Has anybody asked you to do anything odd or out of the ordinary?' he asked.

Karin did not allow her gaze to waver, even at his final question.

'No,' she said, 'I haven't noticed anything that could be of further help to you.'

'Okay,' said Clinton. He breathed deeply and stood up. 'Then please excuse my disturbing you so early.'

Chapter Four

On the 2nd of January 1946, the indictments of the Gestapo and S.D., which had been interrupted by the holidays, were resumed once again. This indictment was of the greatest importance for Vesenstedt. Since it concerned the brutality practised against foreign forced labourers, it also in part involved his own client.

At the end of the day's proceedings Barbara had taken down eleven pages of shorthand notes which she would have to copy out on her Adler typewriter that evening back at their lodgings.

Vesenstedt had applied for a discussion with 'Berger' in the time immediately following the proceedings.

He went along the wide corridor from whose large windows one could look down into the courtyard. The mirror-smooth puddles showed that it had stopped raining. He was already looking forward to the walk 'home'.

Five steps – and he was standing outside the two interview-rooms. The body-search by the sentry was as strict as ever. Obediently, Vesenstedt unbuttoned his jacket, opened his briefcase, showed the documents and was allowed to enter the interview-room.

The large, high-ceilinged room was divided by the long 'interview table'. The underside of the table was blocked off. On top, the 'interview cubicles' were set up. A fine-meshed wire grille separated the accused men from their defending counsel. Documents and papers could be slipped to and fro between them through a slit. A U.S. sentry checked through the documents beforehand, and then got the final permission from his officer, who was on duty in the ante-room.

Vesenstedt stepped up to the U.S. sergeant sitting at a separate desk, and handed over his documents and papers for a minute inspection. The guard went through them carefully, sheet by sheet.

'Berger' sat on the chair of the sixth cubicle to Vesenstedt's left. They greeted each other with a nod of the head and

Vesenstedt told him the contents of the letter which his client's wife had entrusted to him.

He repeated one passage from it word for word. 'Whatever you are made to answer for, whatever you may have actually done, whatever punishment they may condemn you to, however and whenever you may eventually die, remember that nothing in the world will ever change what I feel for you.'

'Thank you,' said 'Berger', 'thank you for doing that for me.'

'Your wife requested it of me,' answered Vesenstedt coolly. He had found it hard to bring himself to utter that quotation from the letter.

'But then,' said 'Berger' thoughtfully, 'there is a thought there - ' He looked Vesenstedt straight in the eyes. Yet Vesenstedt did not react. '“However and whenever you may eventually die” - it seems to me that this thought . . .'

'Well?'

'Perhaps I'm reading too much into it,' said 'Berger', 'but is she trying to tell me something which I perhaps don't quite understand?'

The sound of someone clearing his throat behind him made Vesenstedt turn round. The guard was standing in front of him. The expression on his face was unmistakable.

'You seem to be new here,' said Vesenstedt to him without getting up, 'there is no restriction on conversations between defending counsel and the defendant. Neither as to time nor subject-matter. So long as I do not slip my client any objects which have not been checked, I can conduct myself as I see fit.'

'Provided you don't pass any documents through.'

'Your colleague on the other side will watch out for that. Though of course I had no intention of passing my client a paper or anything else.'

The guard took a step back.

'Berger' felt the moment had come for him to inform his defending counsel that he had made up his mind to retract his plea of not guilty.

'I am prepared,' 'Berger' began, 'to take the full guilt upon my own -'

'Even if you accept full guilt yourself, you must still take up a position on the specific points. Unless you want to do what Hess has done, and plead under Paragraph 151.'

'I have decided,' said 'Berger' firmly, 'to retract my plea of not guilty.'

Vesenstedt was surprised. Had he been mistaken about this man? Was it possible that he was not the unfeeling, cowardly, bureaucratic murderer for which he had taken him until this moment? Was he no longer the man who had trembled for his little scrap of life before the general indictment of the Russians?

'That does indeed come as a surprise to me,' said Vesenstedt, 'but I'm still willing to follow the new course of action which would result from that. However, I must put certain questions to you concerning it. Are you fully aware that you will be condemned to death?'

'I have assumed so since the opening of the trial.'

'To death on the gallows? To a death probably under dishonourable circumstances?'

'Yes,' 'Berger' looked at the man opposite him through the mesh of the wire grille with a steady gaze.

'Are you still afraid of the Russian general indictment?'

'Yes. I am. Unspeakably afraid. I'm also afraid of death. But above all I'm afraid of hearing things about my life, about my work, which as yet I have no inkling of and which I would not be able to stand.'

'You must expect that,' said Vesenstedt. He spoke quietly, almost sympathetically. The change of plea had suddenly made it possible to reach 'Berger'. 'You will also then be revising your written response to the bill of indictment?' The defendants' spontaneously recorded responses to the bill of indictment had been incomprehensible to him.

Ribbentrop, the former Foreign Minister: 'The indictment has been made against the wrong people.'

Donitz, the former First Lord of the Admiralty: 'A piece of American nonsense!'

Goering: 'The victor is always the judge, and the vanquished is always the accused!'

Keitel, the former head of the Wehrmacht High Command: 'For a soldier, orders are orders.'

Hess, Hitler's deputy: 'I cannot remember.'

Kaltenbrunner, head of the S.S.-Reich Central Security Section: 'I do not feel myself to be guilty of any war crime, I only did my duty as a security functionary, and refuse to serve as a substitute for Himmler.'

Schacht: 'I completely fail to understand why I have been accused.'

Rosenberg, the party philosopher: 'The antisemitic move-

ment was only a defensive measure.'

Vesenstedt piled the pages of his documents together. The interview was over as far as he was concerned. From now on he would be employing his energy in the defence to help a man who was prepared to find his way to himself.

'Are you going?'

'Yes, I'm going,' said Vesenstedt. 'Tomorrow, after the proceedings, we will discuss this again.'

'Berger' lowered his head.

'I just wanted to say -'

'Yes?'

'I wanted to say that of course I would not be maintaining my first response.'

'Ah, yes.' The quotations from the other defendants had driven Vesenstedt's original question out of his mind.

'As you know,' said 'Berger', 'I wrote: "I await the trial with a clear conscience. My task consisted only of ensuring a part of the supply of provisions to the Reich and the occupied regions." As soon as I see Mr. Gilbert I shall ask him if I may present a new response.'

'Fine,' said Vesenstedt, 'Until tomorrow, then.' He was in a hurry. The way home was not exactly a pleasure during the hours of darkness.

'My present opinion is,' said 'Berger', undeterred, 'that I accept the trial as a valid one and pray that God may still deem me worthy to receive its judgment.'

Vesenstedt rose: 'We will discuss it tomorrow,' he said, and made as if to leave.

'I have one more request,' said 'Berger'.

'Yes?'

'Please ask my wife how our son is.'

'Your son? You have a son?'

'Didn't you know that?'

'No.' Vesenstedt had not taken any particular interest in his client's private life.

'Yes,' said 'Berger', 'a fourteen-year-old son.'

'All right,' said Vesenstedt, 'I'll ask your wife.' He then signalled to the guard that he wanted to go.

'Berger' was in no such hurry. There was nothing and no one waiting for him. Only his cell, the agonising thoughts and a night he was afraid of.

Two days later, on Friday, the 4th of January, the young U.S. lieutenant Bob Hammersmith met Karin Ruland. The afternoon proceedings were over. Karin was crossing the courtyard of the law-courts.

She looked down and next moment bumped into Bob Hammersmith who was on his way to his jeep.

'Oh, I'm sorry,' said Karin, and Bob noticed how embarrassing she found the accident.

'Doesn't matter,' he said, and tried to smile, but he couldn't quite manage it. He was just too shy with girls.

'I stepped on your foot,' said Karin, noticing Clairon's car driving through the gate, '— your boot's messed up.'

'A little bit of dirt,' Bob looked down 'Don't worry about it.'

'That's all right then,' said Karin, and she went on.

A little later, on Fürth Street near Veit-Stoss Square, a jeep braked hard beside her.

Bob himself did not know afterwards what had made him stop, nor where he had got the courage to speak to her. 'Hello,' he called from the jeep, 'are you going my way by any chance?'

'I don't know which way you are going.' Karin was surprised by the sudden invitation.

'I'll drive you home,' said Bob in a choked voice. If it hadn't made him feel ridiculous, he would have preferred more than anything to put his foot down and drive off without any further explanation.

'It's very kind of you,' said Karin, 'but also rather risky.'

'The ban on fraternisation, I know,' said Bob quickly, 'but after all we do both work in the same building. Jump in quickly before an M.P. comes along.'

'Thanks.' Karin climbed in and Bob drove off.

'My name's Bob Hammersmith,' he said politely, and avoided looking at her. 'I belong to Colonel Andersen's security unit.'

'I'm Karin Ruland and I work as a secretary for Mr. Clairon. Do you know him?'

'Yes, but I don't like him.'

The subject of Clairon interested her. Bob went past the turning into Rothenburg Street and drove out as far as Reichelsdorf doubling back to Karin's address. In this way he spent an extra half hour with her. He was able to talk to her more easily and openly each minute. Earlier he would not have expected it, even as a remote possibility.

Karin chatted away cheerfully and more or less carried him along with her. She had no idea of the change taking place in him. Although she found him pleasant in the most general way, he was still of no particular interest to her. She had never been at all interested in younger men.

Nevertheless, Clairon was a subject of inexhaustible curiosity for her. After Bob had described his feelings about him in such unmistakable terms, she did not hold back from telling him her opinion in detail.

Clairon was a thing, an object, for her, but in no way a man. His charm she regarded as an enjoyable brightening of her tedious work in the court-room. Outside their work, however, she saw an impenetrable wall of glass between them. So long as he boasted about his love affairs in front of her, she at least felt sorry for him. But as soon as he felt he had to flirt with her, he became repellent.

'It's difficult,' she said, 'very difficult, believe me. Especially now that I'm going to have to bother him with a personal favour.'

'What sort of favour?'

'Oh, it's nothing.' She bit her lower lip. Then she quickly began telling him about Clinton Keen and his visit to her two days before. She knew nothing about the friendship between Clinton and Bob.

'He wanted to pump me for information,' she said, 'but he picked the wrong person.'

'Really?' said Bob, and suddenly the blood was pounding in his temples.

'Can I see you again?' he asked as he stopped at number 56 in Rothenburg Street.

'I'm sure we'll see one another again outside the courts or somewhere among all those corridors. Have a nice weekend, and thank you for the drive. It's a good thing we didn't get caught by an M.P.'

'It was fun,' he said, 'I hope you have a nice weekend too.'

He pulled round with his foot hard down on the gas, and drove back towards the law-courts.

That evening, Clinton Keen appeared somewhat later than usual. He looked tired.

'Problems?' asked Bob.

'Hm.' Clinton put his foot down and the BMW shot out

through the gate on to Fürth Street.

There was not a great deal happening at the mess that evening. They found a table to themselves, screened from all the rest. After the second beer, Clinton came back to Bob's question. Bob had the feeling his friend was truly grateful to be able to talk to him about it at last.

'I don't know,' said Clinton, stroking his hand across his forehead absent-mindedly. 'How much have I told you about Steinbronn . . . ?'

'Just that he was a big deal in the S.S. and came forward of his own free will.'

'Yes,' Clinton took a swallow. 'He came forward of his own free will to squeal on his comrades. At least that's the way he told it. Nothing very remarkable. Happens just about every day in our zone of occupation.'

Bob said nothing. He knew it would have been wrong to interrupt Clinton now.

'So far, so good,' said Clinton, and he leaned on the table with both elbows and took the glass in both hands, 'but here's the snag.' In muted tones, he told him in a few words about the supposed plot against the trial.

'And what does your office in Bamberg say about it?'

'That's just it,' Clinton took a deep breath, drained his glass and put it down hard on the table. 'I shall have to report it. Tomorrow. The day after at the latest.'

'You haven't yet . . . ?'

'If it had all gone the way I imagined, I could say to them: what do you mean? I didn't report it because I wanted to check the situation out first. Am I supposed to set the whole works in motion just because of some trifling matter? Now that I've checked the situation out, I could tell them, I can say a bit more about it. Either the guy is lying, or he's a psychopath. Or else there really is something to the business, and I can come up with some names.'

'And what are you going to do now?' Bob looked at Clinton questioningly.

'What can I do? I have to wait for Steinbronn. Another two days, maybe three. Then I'll let them know in Bamberg. All I've got to go on is this Steinbronn, nothing else. Our friend Clairon's secretary turned out to be a red herring.'

'Clairon's secretary? What's she got to do with it?'

'I don't know. She was my only clue. In a case like this you

have to follow up the most idiotic little leads.'

'Clairon's secretary?'

'Yeah. Do you know her then?'

Bob felt the blood rushing to his face. That afternoon he had made up his mind not to mention the meeting with Karin Ruland. At least not that day. Now, since Clinton was putting the question straight to him, he would have to talk about it. He described the meeting in complete detail.

When he had finished, Clinton looked up, took a packet of Philip Morris' out of the side-pocket of his jacket, and held the packet out to Bob.

'That's a damned good piece of information, Bob. You've done some good work. And I'm really grateful,' said Clinton, 'because if it hadn't been for you, you can bet I'd never have thought of buttonholing that girl again.'

The train rattled over the bridge. Harald Erich Steinbronn stood at one of the tiny windows of his room, and looked up towards the bridge. He could only hear the train. The sharp angle hid it from view. The railway bridge almost arched over the roof of 'The Customs House Inn'.

It was just a plain public house – a ground floor, one storey, and above it, in the middle of the building, a little gable-roof with two rooms. The washed-out yellow of the façade provided the only touch of colour, and the perpetually dark entrance-hall smelt of beer. On the left was the door to the smokey tap-room. Further back, a staircase led up to the few guest-rooms. At present, these were occupied by refugee families with all their possessions.

The entrance-hall led out into a yard planted with four sweet chestnut trees; an iron post supported the washing line and beer barrels lay stacked against the side of the house. Immediately behind the yard, the Klausen Hill sloped upwards.

Seen from the stairway, Steinbronn's room was the left-hand one of the two gable rooms. Next to him were the barman's sleeping quarters. Steinbronn had already begun to suspect that he was Clinton Keen's contact-man.

The question of who this contact-man was had occupied Steinbronn for the greater part of the first day. Whom had Keen set on his tail? The innkeeper? The blonde girl who belonged to one of the refugee families? The barman?

The question became a brain-teaser for him. Every time he

met anybody in the guest-house, he would suspect them. He had made up his mind to discover Keen's man, if only to get him off his back.

He had not noticed Billsteiner, however, even though he had seen him briefly that afternoon.

Steinbronn had glanced down into the yard. Three young lads were standing together under the chestnut trees. One of them was holding a bicycle. A fat woman was wheeling a hand-cart past the entrance to the yard. A grey-haired man crossed the yard of the neighbouring house with a bucket. It was Billsteiner.

The house next to the inn was built directly on to it. It was a farmhouse with stables and a three-storey threshing barn which rose above the yard at right angles to the house. Former police inspector Richard Billsteiner had installed himself in a room beside the barn. From a tiny window he was able to observe one of the windows of Steinbronn's room. He could see whether or not Steinbronn had the curtain drawn, and when he switched the light on or off, but no more.

He had been arranged to be informed by the boy with the bicycle as soon as Steinbronn left the inn.

The Landshut C.I.C. had seen to the problem of both Steinbronn's and Billsteiner's lodgings. Billsteiner could make use of the local C.I.C. to get in touch with Keen in Nuremberg.

Up until a few weeks before, he would not have dared to dream that at his 56 years of age he might suddenly be working for the American secret service. He looked in the mirror with its broad, dark frame. Although his grey hair and bushy eyebrows made him look older, his body was wiry.

Joe Stevens had picked out Billsteiner from the files of Nuremberg detectives. Since then Keen had used him twice for relatively simple enquiries concerning former party comrades of the N.S.D.A.P. Billsteiner had coped with both jobs to Keen's satisfaction.

The present job was the most difficult so far, but also, in Billsteiner's opinion, the most interesting. It was a job which resembled his former work most closely.

For him the fascinating part of his profession as a police detective had always been the study of human psychology, and it was from this angle that he had been observing Steinbronn.

The former S.S.-storm-troop commander who had worked in the Reich Central Security Section as an expert on Russia in

Department VI, had, as ordered, registered at the inn with his full rank. The innkeeper, who knew only that he had to make a room available to this guest on the instructions of the military authorities, did not turn a hair on hearing his rank.

Landshut within the space of a few weeks more than 10,000 refugees had flooded into the town. Refugees from the north, from Silesia, from Poland, and from the Sudetenland. The city fathers were powerless to deal with the streams of people, the hordes of the aged and infirm, of children without parents, of men and women who did not know where their families were, or whether they were even still alive.

Except for the destruction of the railway station, and the neighbouring residential area, the bridges over the Isar, which had been blown up in the last days of the war, and a small amount of damage caused by artillery fire, the town had been spared.

This was the only explanation for the uncontrollable streams of refugees pouring into the town, and the only reason why so many people were able to find shelter among its native population.

The faces changed, the tide of refugees brought new ones every day, and there was scarcely a single person who knew anybody else among them. Nobody took any notice of Billsteiner and Steinbronn.

After a few hours, Richard Billsteiner had formulated his picture of Steinbronn. He was, he decided, the perfect example of a man who has to stand out. It was not his nature to move about in secrecy. He needed an audience, even if only unconsciously and even if it involved personal risk.

To Billsteiner Steinbronn seemed an easy customer.

On the day of his arrival, Steinbronn left the inn shortly after lunch. Billsteiner followed him.

Steinbronn walked along beside the Isar as far as the Ländtor Square. From time to time he would look around to see if anyone was following him, but Billsteiner was ready for that. He held well back, and Steinbronn did not notice him.

After the Ländtor Square the streets became busier and Billsteiner found it even easier to follow him.

Steinbronn's route led through the narrow Theatre Street to Landshut's main thoroughfare, the 'Old Town'. Billsteiner knew the town from his earlier days, and was not surprised to

find the old houses intact. Nevertheless, he was deeply impressed.

If he avoided looking at the people, he could have believed that there had never been a war.

The 'Old Town' looked like a wide market street from the Middle Ages. The narrow gothic gables pressed up close to one another, the late gothic arcades, the town hall with its oriel from the Renaissance, the elegant stepped gables of the Pappenberger House opposite, and the fine residence with its early classical façade.

Steinbronn turned off into Rose Lane, and came out on the New Town. The New Town ran parallel to the Old Town, and consisted of a broad street rather like a square with gothic gabled houses, baroque buildings and the thick walls of gates leading into the ancient inns.

Followed by Billsteiner, Steinbronn walked past a narrow house with curving gables, without realising that he had come closest to what both he and Billsteiner were looking for. This building contained the Moosmüller Boarding House, where one of the men Steinbronn wanted to meet was living – the man with the deformed nail on the middle finger of his right hand.

While Steinbronn crossed the New Town, and headed for the Golden Sun, the pub in which he had seen the three men, Billsteiner posted himself behind the projection in the wall of the next house.

Steinbronn went up the three steps and opened the door to the tap-room. A surge of voices, dense clouds of smoke and a powerful smell of beer swept over him. As though to ward them off, he held his hand in front of his eyes for a moment and searched through the room; none of the three men were there.

He left the pub and continued on his way. Billsteiner had the impression that Steinbronn was now wandering aimlessly through the town.

They crossed the two temporary bridges across the Isar, walked past the Seligenthal Monastery and a long way down Seligenthal Street. At the Flutmulde Steinbronn turned off again into Luitpold Street. He decided there was no point in this vague wandering. He would go back to the 'Customs House'.

Had he made up his mind to go on the few extra yards to the ruined railway station, he would have met the three men he was looking for.

One of the last bombing raids of the war had turned Landshut station into a wasteland of craters, stones, blackened remains of walls, and shattered remains of locomotives and rails.

The few trains which were operating once again were now loaded and unloaded a few hundred yards outside the former station area, in the open air.

As the train from Munich pulled in, Ralf Schilling strode towards it. The train had hardly stopped when the doors were flung open and the people leaped down on to the stone ballast between the lines. From a compartment in the third carriage from last, a thick-set man with thickly waving grey-blond hair jumped down. He had prominent cheekbones and hard eyes. Ralf waved to him across the crowd of people, and the man signalled that he had seen him.

They shook hands briefly, and the stranger announced that he would have a car at his disposal the next time. They then walked together in silence across the tracks towards Station Road. It was not until they had separated themselves from the mass of travellers in Nikola Street near the protestant elementary school that Ralf Schilling spoke.

'What's new, *Hauptsturmführer*?'

'Schirach has been dropped,' replied Ulrich Lainz.

The thirty-six-year-old Lainz was a former *Hauptsturmführer* in the 38th Armoured Assault Division, one of the elite units of the Waffen-S.S. Like Schilling, he still wore his army coat. His coat, however, was of shiny grey leather. Naturally, all the markings from earlier times had been removed.

'Schirach dropped?' repeated Schilling dutifully. Despite his former rank as district leader in the Hitler Youth, he felt himself to be subordinate. Especially as *Hauptsturmführer* Ulrich Lainz was the leader of the battlegroup of their subversive organisation.

'Yes,' said Lainz, 'Command have turned him down.'

By 'Command' he meant the top-level of their underground organisation, which, since its rebuilding, was based in Frankfurt am Main.

'And why has he been dropped?' asked Schilling.

'Schirach was never an uncompromising fighter for our cause. Especially since he became Gauleiter of Vienna. Everything we hear from Nuremberg about him confirms that. We are no longer interested in Schirach.'

They carried on this conversation with considerable caution. If they passed close by anyone, they either dropped their voices or broke off completely.

Now that Command was no longer 'interested' in Schirach, his name would be struck off the list of those who were to be set free.

'Then that leaves only Kaltenbrunner, Frank and Seyss-Inquart?' Schilling had to make an effort to keep up.

'Frank is doubtful too. What with this confession of his, it looks as if he's gradually cutting himself out.'

'Then there are just two?'

'No, four.'

'Who else?'

Lainz mentioned 'Berger's' name.

'That's good. He's one of us. And the fourth?' Schilling looked at him questioningly.

'Possibly Goering.'

'Goering?'

'Your question is justified. Command wants to continue watching his conduct during the trial for the time being. Have you got satisfactory quarters?'

'Yes, *Hauptsturmführer*. Moosmüller Boarding House.'

'Under your own name?'

'Of course not, *Hauptsturmführer*.'

'Is the proprietor on our side?'

'I don't know. I would think more likely not.'

'Have you had word from Peters yet?'

'He's already here.'

'Very good. Everything's running like clockwork.'

'He's living outside town. In a guest-house in Kumhausen.'

'Kumhausen? And how does he reach us?'

'It's only three or four miles. Peters is a good walker. He picked up the order through my cover address.'

'Cover address?'

'Something I've set up. In the meat market behind the town hall. One of the men working there was in the 17th Division.'

'Excellent. Congratulations, Schilling.'

'Thank you, *Hauptsturmführer*.' Schilling's eyes took on a shimmering gleam.

They were walking under the arches of the Old Town. Lainz asked how far he had got with Clairon's secretary in the meantime. Schilling described his visit to Werner Ruland and Rut-

land's willingness to persuade his sister to do what the organisation wanted.

'And? Has he done it?' Lainz shot him a brief glance.

'I was intending to see him tomorrow.'

'Good. You do that. We have to be sure of everything. As you know, I'm giving you a free hand in this business. When it's all fixed, come to Munich straight away.'

'Yes.' Schilling dropped the title of 'Hauptsturmführer'. It was too crowded there. 'And the other girl? Gisela Silinski?' he asked, finding it difficult to push past the people and stay by Lainz's side.

'Everything is in order. I've had that expressly confirmed once more.'

'When is she coming?'

'Depends on the men at the top.'

'Have you met her yet?'

'No. Have you fixed things up with Kinast?'

It was Kinast whom Harald Erich Steinbronn had described to Clinton Keen as the 'third man' in the group of conspirators, the man who had picked up Lainz and Schilling from the pub when Steinbronn was with them.

'Kinast has pulled out,' said Schilling in a small voice. The question of Kinast had been making him uneasy for hours.

'Pulled out?' Lainz stopped dead. The people pushed past him.

'He felt too weak for it. If you ask me, it's his conscience.'

'For God's sake, Schilling!' Lainz drew him to one side and spoke more softly. 'You mustn't let that happen! Do you understand? We can't afford that risk. That man could get us in a hell of a mess!' Lainz walked on. 'Listen, how far is it to the castle from here?'

'It's another good two hundred yards after St. Martin's Church, and then you turn up to the left.'

'You'll take care of that business with Kinast, right?'

'Yes.' Schilling felt as though a weight had been lifted off him.

Trausnitz Castle rose steeply above the roofs. The building dated back as far as the 13th century. With its outer and inner courtyards, its battlements along the bailey, the broad, rectangular Wittelsbach Tower and the late-romanesque chapel,

the castle, together with the Church of St. Martin, was the main landmark of the town.

Nowadays, however, stove-pipes protruded from many of the windows and lines stretched across the courtyards with washing hung out to dry on them. Parts of the castle had been turned into a refugee camp swarming with people. This was where Ralf Schilling had ordered the man called Peters to meet *Hauptsturmführer* Lainz.

Bruno Peters was twenty-six years old, like Schilling, and belonged to the 17th S.S.-Division with the rank of *Oberscharführer*. He, too, wore his former uniform, now with the markings removed. He towered above both Lainz and Schilling by more than a head, and his thin body and bony, yellowish face gave him the appearance of someone suffering from some stomach complaint. Beside him, Ulrich Lainz looked the very picture of strength and energy.

After they had met in the outer courtyard, Schilling led the way to the Castle Gardens. In the so-called Castle Gardens, the area behind the castle, they were undisturbed. The undulating terrain with its dense growth of trees was still partly covered with a thin layer of snow. Apart from a few children playing, the garden was deserted as far as the eye could see.

The three men talked in chopped sentences about Peters's lodgings in Kumhausen. Then Lainz broached the subject of the purpose of his visit.

'First: from now on we are to be in a state of full alert. Is that understood?'

'Understood, *Hauptsturmführer*.' Schilling and Peters answered in unison and came to attention.

'Second: Landshut is only to be left with my permission.'

'Yes, *Hauptsturmführer*.'

'Third: you will only receive orders directly through me.'

'Yes, *Hauptsturmführer*.'

'Fourth: until you are transferred to the Nuremberg area you will remain in your present quarters. Understood?'

'Understood, *Hauptsturmführer*.'

'Fifth: three days ago, our project was given the code name "Battle-Group Edelweiss". Is that clear?'

'Code name of our project is "Battle-Group Edelweiss",' said Schilling in a military manner, and Peters repeated it.

'Do you need money?'

Schilling and Peters looked at one another. 'No, *Hauptsturmführer*.'

'When you need money, apply to my address in Munich.'

'Yes, *Hauptsturmführer*.'

'Any questions?'

'When do you think it will be?' Peters dug his hands into the pockets of his army great-coat. He was cold.

'Next week,' said Lainz, shrugging his shoulders, 'maybe the week after. Maybe not for a month or two, I don't know. The order will come from higher up. We are just the battle-group, as you know.'

'Yes, *Hauptsturmführer*,' said Peters. 'Will we remain at this strength?'

'No,' said Lainz, 'the battle-group will be increased to seven men. I can't tell you when the other four men will be arriving. It's even possible that they won't join us until we are in Nuremberg. I've already selected some of them. Anything else?'

'Yes,' said Peters, 'my Luger.'

'What about it?'

'I've only two magazines of ammunition left.'

'I'll take care of it. You can expect fifty rounds.'

'Thank you, *Hauptsturmführer*.'

'Anything else?' Lainz turned to Schilling.

'Yes, *Hauptsturmführer*, the plan.'

'I was just about to come to that. It's been decided, as I've already told you, that the battle-group will consist of seven men. Three of them will be giving cover, four will each free one prisoner. At the same time other sections of the organisation will be going into action with diversionary manoeuvres. In Würzburg, Wiesbaden, Passau, Kempten, Augsburg and so on. Altogether about one thousand men.'

'Is it definite that four will be set free?' asked Peters.

'It hasn't been completely settled yet, as I told Schilling earlier. Goering's behaviour has to be watched first. Command was not agreed about the state of his morale. However, should he continue to make a good impression, as he has so far, then I am convinced we will be taking Goering along with us too. In any event, you, Peters, will be going after Kaltenbrunner.'

'Thank you, *Hauptsturmführer*.'

As Defendant number 6, Ernst Kaltenbrunner, the former

lawyer from Linz in Upper Austria, sat in his cell, he had no idea that anyone was planning to set him free, that in the jungle of those times, an S.S. underground organisation had been formed from left-over ideological fanatics. He knew nothing of 'Battle-Group Edelweiss', nor of the former *Oberscharführer* of the 17th S.S.-Division who had been selected for the task of setting him free.

Ernst Kaltenbrunner was tall, with a narrow, serious face and smooth, dark hair.

Relatively late, in 1932, he joined the National Socialists. He was Police President for Vienna, Upper and Lower Austria, State Secretary for Security in Austria and Chief of Police. He then became a member of the German Reichstag, Police General and General of the S.S., and finally, as successor to Reinhard Heydrich, head of the Reich Central Security Section, and chief of the Secret State Police, known as the Gestapo, and of the Security Service, known as the S.D.

On the 15th of May 1945 he was taken prisoner by U.S. troops in Austria.

The indictment against him was brought under headings 1, 3 and 4: conspiracy, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Having suffered a stroke as a result of a cerebral haemorrhage, he did not take part in the proceedings until four weeks after the opening of the trial.

He could only remember with horror how, on that first day of the trial, his fellow prisoners turned away, and acted as though they had not seen him.

On the fourth day the indictment was aimed directly at him with all its force.

The American prosecutor John Harlan Amen summoned him to the witness-box. 'What did you have to do with the final razing of the Warsaw Ghetto? Nothing as usual?'

Kaltenbrunner leaned forwards and rested his head in his hands against the balustrade. 'I had nothing to do with it.'

'S.S.-Brigadeführer and Police President Jürgen Stroop was a pretty good friend of yours, was he not?'

'I have probably not seen Stroop more than two or three times in my life, at Reichsführer Himmler's.'

'We will find out whether Stroop confirmed what you are trying to tell the Tribunal.' Amen produced before the court a sworn statement in which Kaltenbrunner was accused of having passed on Himmler's orders from the Reich Central Security

Section to the Warsaw Security Police for execution.

'Do you say that that statement of Jurgen Stroop's is true or false?' Amen asked him.

Kaltenbrunner went chalk-white. 'It is untrue.'

U.S. Prosecutor William F. Walsh then handed the court a report in the form of a diary kept by Stroop. The report was printed on thick, hand-made paper, with many illustrations, and covered seventy-five pages. It was written in sober, matter-of-fact bureaucratic German and bore the title: 'There is no longer a Jewish district in Warsaw!'

The report was read out.

There was a roaring in Kaltenbrunner's ears.

Afterwards he could only remember isolated parts of the report. But a few sentences were engraved in his brain as though carved on it with a chisel.

'The Jewish district in the city of Warsaw – the Ghetto – an area four kilometres long by two and a half in breadth – was inhabited by about 400,000 Jews. It contained 27,000 apartments with an average of two and a half rooms in each. It was separated from the rest of the city by partition-walls and by the walling-up of streets, windows, doors and the spaces between buildings.'

'Before the beginning of the major offensive, a cordon was thrown round the perimeter to prevent a break-out by the Jews.'

'On April 19th 1943 we drove into the Ghetto with three guns and three tanks.'

'After the first few days, I realised that the plan could not be carried out. The Jews were fighting for their lives.'

'On April 23rd 1943 Himmler issued the order to comb out the Ghetto with relentless toughness. I therefore decided to carry out its total destruction by burning it down.'

'It was not unusual for the Jews to remain in the burning buildings until the heat and the fear of being burned to death made them leap out of the upper storeys. With broken bones they then tried to crawl across the street into blocks of buildings which were not yet, or only partly, in flames.'

'After the first eight days, it was no longer pleasant staying down in the sewers either. Large numbers of Jews, who could not be counted, were eliminated in sewers and cellars with explosives.'

'The longer the resistance continued, the harder grew the men

of the Waffen-S.S., the police and the Wehrmacht, who, as loyal brothers-in-arms, devoted themselves tirelessly to the fulfilment of their task.'

'When one takes into account that the men of the Waffen-S.S. for the most part had only three or four weeks of training behind them, the courage they showed must be given particular recognition.'

'It is also clear that the sappers of the Wehrmacht accomplished the work of the explosions with tireless enthusiasm.'

'Again and again it was observed that despite the great intensity of the fire, Jews and bandits preferred to go back into the flames rather than fall into our hands.'

'The major offensive was closed on May 16th 1943 at 8.15 p.m. with the blowing up of the Warsaw Synagogue.'

'Only by the continuous and inexhaustible application of all our forces did we succeed – with the loss of only 16 men in all – in capturing or definitely destroying a total of 56,065 Jews. To this number should also be added the Jews killed in explosions, fires and so on, who could not be counted.'

'Since even after the major offensive it is to be expected that a few isolated Jews still survive among the ruins, their means of survival must be removed by the destruction of any corner of refuge and by cutting off the water-supply.'

Lainz, Schilling and Peters had left the Castle Gardens and gone back down to the town. They were now sitting in the Golden Sun Inn, drinking beer. Lainz's orders were to avoid all further mention of the 'Battle-Group Edelweiss' plan in public places, and instead they told one another coarse jokes, swapped sexual anecdotes, and generally behaved exactly the same as all the other customers.

Their table stood right up against the kitchen-hatch and gave them a good view of the whole room. Just as the waitress was clearing away the empty plates, Ulrich Lainz looked over towards the door and nudged Schilling with his elbow.

'Don't we know him?'

Schilling's eyes followed his. 'Yes,' he said, 'we do know him.'

Harald Erich Steinbronn had entered the room.

Though appearing to search for an empty chair, he had immediately spotted the three men at the table by the kitchen-hatch. As though by chance, he pushed past the other customers towards them.

'May I?' he said politely, and then changed his tone: 'What a surprise! Do you mind?' Without waiting for an answer, he pulled up the empty chair from the next table.

Schilling looked at Lainz. Lainz nodded. Steinbronn took off his coat, sat down awkwardly, ordered himself a beer and said how happy he was to see them again. He monopolised the conversation, and soon began talking about the war and his activities in the Reich Central Security Section.

Neither Lainz, nor Schilling, nor Peters suspected anything, even when Steinbronn referred to their conversation of fourteen days ago. Lainz merely interrupted him by drawing his attention to the other customers. Steinbronn then made it understood that he would like to hear more, and might be interested in 'working with them'.

Lainz said that he had to be leaving in half an hour, at 4.30, to go back to Munich. However, Schilling, his right-hand man, would be remaining there in Landsbut, and Steinbronn should arrange to meet him the next day.

Schilling nodded and suggested eleven in the morning.

'Fine,' said Steinbronn, 'eleven o'clock. And where?'

'In the Castle Gardens,' said Schilling, 'behind Trausnitz Castle.'

Lainz hurried the others to leave, and paid for Steinbronn with the rest. They said goodbye to him and left the pub.

Steinbronn sat there a while longer, feeling pleased with himself. After a time, he took out his notebook, tore out a page and wrote: 'Success. Arranged to meet tomorrow morning eleven o'clock Castle Gardens.'

Then he put the notebook back in his jacket, keeping the torn-out page in his hand, stood up, put on his long, grey leather coat, pushed the piece of paper down into his coat-pocket and walked through the door.

On the street he looked round to see if one of the three men or anyone else was waiting for him. Seeing nothing suspicious, he set off to St. Martin's Church.

He was no longer thinking about Keen's contact-man. But Billsteiner, who had been waiting for him patiently in the entrance-way of the neighbouring building, was still there.

As instructed, Steinbronn entered the church through the first side-door past Church Lane. The high, narrow Gothic nave with its extraordinarily slender pillars took his breath away for a moment.

Turning to the left he found the niche with the double confessional which Keen had described. Pausing first to make sure that there was no one watching, he entered the confessional on the right. With one hand he took the piece of paper out of his coat-pocket, lifted the loose board on the knee-rail and slid the note under it.

Then he left the church, went past the main entrance and up the two steps to the arcade which led to Trinity Square. From there it was not much further to Achdorf.

On the other side of the street a slightly-built young man in an army great-coat stepped out of the entrance to the Crown Prince Cinema. He also walked in the direction of Trinity Square and did not let Steinbronn out of his sight. The man was Ralf Schilling.

Richard Billsteiner waited on the corner of Church Lane and the Old Town until Steinbronn had come out of the church again, before slipping inside to pick up the message.

Chapter Five

In Nuremberg Captain Clinton Keen brought his BMW to a halt outside the law-courts just before 5 p.m. He still had a few minutes until the afternoon proceedings were over, and Clairon's secretary would be leaving the building.

He lit a cigarette and leaned back in his seat. That morning, checking over her personal record, he discovered that she came from Berlin, that she was 25 years old, and that her parents were dead. She had previously worked as secretary to an architect and had then been seconded to an armaments firm. She spoke English; she had been a member neither of the N.S.D.A.P. nor the B.D.M., but had belonged to the German Labour Front from 1940 to 1941. She also had a brother who had been exempted from military service until near the end of the war, and who like her had not belonged to any Nazi organisation apart from the National Socialist Student Union, and was now working for a farmer in Essenbach.

A strange girl, thought Clinton, as he flicked the cigarette out of the car window again after only a few puffs. A girl who was clearly not a Nazi, who radiated openness and seemed almost ingenuous, and yet had lied to him.

He could still see her eyes in front of him. Clear, pure, almost virginal. They were aquamarine blue. He made up his mind to discover the truth about her today, by whatever means necessary. Time was running out. He could not put off his report to Bamberg any longer.

The afternoon hearing was over. Heavy traffic began to pour through the iron gate. Clinton recognised the Chevrolet which came to collect Lord Justice Lawrence every day, then Biddle, the former U.S. Attorney General, who was driven by a G.I. in a jeep. The Humber of the Swiss journalist, the car of the Belgian one. Then Clairon's NSU – but without Karin Ruland.

She did not appear until five minutes later, amongst a group of girls.

'Fräulein Ruland?'

'Yes?' She stopped walking. The other girls went on.

'You do remember me?'

'Of course . . .'

' . . . I must ask you to accompany me to my office.'

'To your office? What's it about . . . ?'

'I'll explain that when we get there.' He indicated the car.

'Please get in.'

She climbed into the seat beside him, he got back behind the wheel and drove off.

She stared straight in front of her, holding her writing-case on her lap. When they turned into Sulzbach Street, she asked him if he could stop for a moment.

'Stop? What for?'

'There's pumpkin-honey on sale today,' she said. He looked at her angrily, and she added, 'On coupon E of the ration-book. If I don't hurry, I'll have to go without.'

'Sorry,' he said, and drove on to Kneipp Street.

'Get out, please.' He led her into his office, signalled to Joe to fetch his shorthand notebook, opened the door to the interrogation room, and motioned her to go in first and sit down on the chair in front of the desk.

He did not use the powerful interrogation lamps.

'Fräulein Ruland,' he said harshly, 'you were not a member of the N.S.D.A.P.?'

'No, I was not a member.' She looked at him uncomprehendingly.

'Nor a member of any of the organisations connected with it?'

'Yes,' she said, 'the German Labour Front. I don't understand why you're asking me.'

'Why were you in the German Labour Front?'

'What else could I do? I was a secretary. Why do people in other countries join unions?'

'The German Labour Front was not a union.'

'But it took the place of the unions. That's what they told us, anyway.'

'As a member of the German Labour Front you were in favour of National Socialism.'

'Only a person who didn't know what the situation was like in Germany could think that.'

'I know the situation very well! Too well! I've spent enough

time studying the subject. I know that Hitler was elected with 99.9 per cent of all votes.'

'But not by me. I wasn't old enough to vote at the time.'

'... And I know that nobody says they were in favour of National Socialism now. Where have they gone to, all of a sudden, all those Nazis? Vanished! Disappeared into thin air. They never existed.' There was a pause.

'Okay,' he said, 'so you weren't a National Socialist.'

'No, I wasn't.'

'Your father, perhaps?'

'No, he wasn't either. Otherwise we would have been better off.'

'So far as I know, you didn't do too badly. Your brother was able to study ...'

'That doesn't prove anything. Werner didn't want to join the army. That's why he got the idea of studying meteorology. That way he was classified UK. As far as I know, there was a shortage of meteorologists.'

'Who do you know here in Nuremberg?'

'Nobody.'

'You know Mr. Clairon, for example.'

'You know I do.'

'And you left the law-courts with a group of girls.'

'I only knew two of them.'

'Fräulein Ruland!' He raised his voice again. 'When I asked you who you knew here in Nuremberg, you said "nobody", and already we have a list of three! I shall ask you again: who are the people you know in Nuremberg? I want them all named. Every one. No matter how unimportant they seem to you. Even if you don't know why I asked you to come here. Now then!'

'One of the girls is called Gertrud. I don't know her second name. I don't even know the other girl's first name.'

'Who else do you know? What about your landlady?'

'I haven't got a landlady. The building has been requisitioned by the military authorities. It's supposed to have belonged to a Herr Wegscheider before that. I've never seen him.'

'Do you not also know a member of the U.S. Army, for example?'

'By sight, no more than that.'

'A lieutenant?'

'Lieutenant? Are lieutenants the ones with the ...?' She tapped her fingers against her upper arm.

'Yes, those are the ones with the . . . Well?'

'Yesterday one very kindly gave me a lift in his car. A young one. We bumped into one another in the courtyard of the law-courts. He told me he was in Colonel Andersen's security unit. His name is Bob – let me think – no, I can't remember his second name. It had several syllables, anyway.'

Clinton did not move a muscle. Her statement was correct. Apparently Bob had not made much of an impression.

'Now we know about four people,' Clinton snapped at her. 'Now who else do you know?'

'Give me a moment to think.'

'You think. You think hard!'

'No one,' she said after a while, 'apart from these three people I really don't know anyone else in Nuremberg.'

'You're not serious. Are you trying to tell me that you eat alone, go to the cinema alone, spend all your free time alone?'

'Yes,' she said stubbornly, 'that's exactly what I do. I eat alone. I spend my free time alone. And since I've been here, I have only gone to the cinema once. Obviously you've got the wrong idea . . . The fact that Mr. Clairon let me off work today was purely a favour on his part. He wanted to give me a chance to buy some of the pumpkin-honey they were selling.'

He pretended not to notice her challenging look. 'In what capacity is the girl Gertrud employed in the law-courts?'

'She is the secretary of one of the defence counsel or assistants, I don't know exactly.'

'What's the name of the counsel?'

'No idea. I just eat with Gertrud now and again in the canteen. We don't talk about work.'

'What about personal matters?'

'So far it's been to do with the past, about love and all that.'

'And this Gertrud is a National Socialist?'

'No idea. We never talked about that.'

'Okay.' He was ready to come to the point. 'You remember our first conversation?'

'Yes.'

'I put a question to you then, which you did not answer truthfully. Or rather, I asked you a number of questions adding up to one particular one.'

She said nothing. She knew what he was driving at. She realised she had to come up with an explanation, and that under no circumstances could she give Werner away.

'I will put this question to you one more time.' He was studying her eyes carefully. Nothing about them suggested a lack of assurance. 'Have any strangers attempted to make contact with you recently? Have you experienced anything unusual?'

'I remember the question. Let me think for a moment.' She looked past him as though she were clarifying her memory. 'No,' she said, 'I can't answer your question any differently.'

'Okay,' he said sharply, 'how then would you explain the sentence "He wanted to pump me for information, but he picked the wrong person"? You made that statement, referring to me, to Lieutenant Bob Hammersmith.'

So that was it! It flashed through her mind, yes, that was the mistake she had made so stupidly. She had to smile. 'That statement did certainly refer to you,' she said slowly, 'but not to your question about the "unusual things" which were supposed to have happened to me. It was only your impossible habit of coming practically at the dead of night to flirt with me.'

'What?' He had been ready for any excuse, but not for this cheekiness.

'Isn't that what you came for?' She asked innocently.

'Is that the only answer you can give?' He spoke so loudly and furiously that he shocked even himself.

'Yes,' she said, 'that's the only answer. Will you please have me taken home now. I won't be able to get my pumpkin-honey any more, unfortunately. The shops will be shut by now.'

He sensed that there would be little advantage in keeping her there any longer, and gave Joe a sign.

After they had left, Clinton leafed through the personal records of all the women working on the defence until he came to the only one with the first name of Gertrud. Secretary Gertrud Dittmayer. But she had been neither a member of the N.S.D.A.P. nor any of its organisations.

The Castle Gardens were as deserted as the day before. There were not even any children to be seen playing there.

Ralf Schilling stopped for breath. The climb up the steep Prince's Stairway, which the local people called the 'Ox Piano', had left him short of breath. His gaze wandered over the gently rising meadows. Steinbronn was not there yet.

He could not get his mind off the events of the morning. He had ferreted out Kinast. He had shot him without a word, and

thrown the body into the rushing Isar; and was prepared, if he had to, to do the same to Steinbronn.

His right hand reached down into his coat-pocket for his Mauser. The feel of the weapon calmed him. He wanted to get the conversation over with quickly, as he still had another important piece of business to attend to that day – the visit to Essenbach.

Had Peters already taken up his post? They had decided that he would cover his rear. He was sure to be standing behind one of the broadly spreading groups of maples by now, or else watching from one of the dense thickets.

He was still following that train of thought when Steinbronn stepped through the gate by the main tower of the castle. Yes, he had the walk of a high-ranking officer all right.

They approached one another.

'Let's keep it short,' said Schilling, in a rough voice which contrasted with the abject tone he adopted with Lainz. In this conversation he felt he had the upper hand, regardless of Steinbronn's former rank.

'That suits me,' said Steinbronn, running his hand through his thin hair.

'I've been instructed by my superiors to ask you a few questions.'

'Go ahead.'

'You say you were in the Reich Central Security Section? Can you prove that?'

'I haven't got an identity card any more, if that's what you mean. I can only tell you I am, or rather was, a storm-troop commander and worked as a Russian expert in Department Roman Six.'

'Can you corroborate these statements? With names or internal information?'

'Would it help you if I mentioned names, like Storm-Troop Commander Dr. Augsburg or Brigadier Professor Dr. Six? Not much. Look, if we can't trust one another, there's no sense in talking.'

Lainz had prepared Schilling for this kind of reaction from Steinbronn.

'Fine,' said Schilling, 'then let's end the discussion.'

'But that's ridiculous!' Steinbronn relented, 'I understand your caution perfectly. All right, we'll talk about Professor Dr. Franz Six. He was from Mannheim. His father was an up-

holsterer. Brigadier Six was an envoy in the Foreign Section, then section head in Roman Seven, Enemy Intelligence. He was also President of the German Institute of Foreign Studies and Dean of the Faculty of Foreign Studies at the university of Berlin. If I remember rightly, his wife's maiden name was Offenbach. He was overseen by Dr. Horst Mahnke and Dr. Rolf Oebser-Röder. Is that enough?

'We'll check it. You said yesterday you were interested in working with us?'

'Yes, I am. That is . . .'

Schilling looked at him questioningly.

' . . . that is,' Steinbronn continued in a grating voice, 'if after hearing a few details I . . .'

'As a storm-troop commander you should know that that's not possible,' Schilling interrupted him sharply. 'Either you decide to join us, in which case you should know the oath of allegiance, or else . . .'

'My dear fellow,' said Steinbronn condescendingly, 'you're not the only one who has to observe a certain caution. I do too. Besides, may I remind you that scarcely a fortnight ago you were discussing your intentions quite openly in a public house.'

Schilling felt himself growing uneasy again. It annoyed him. He had not meant to get involved in a long discussion with Steinbronn.

'I really don't think,' he said, 'that you could have heard all that much of what we were talking about then. Even if you did, it was only the kind of general gossip you might hear at any table of bar-room politicians these days. The details of our organisation are secret.'

'Fine,' said Steinbronn, 'what next? What do you suggest?'

'In the next few days you'll have an opportunity to work for us. We'll let you know. Where can we contact you?'

Steinbronn gave the address of the 'Customs House' Inn.

'And where can I find you?'

'Me?' said Schilling 'What for?'

'Because I might have to move somewhere else,' Steinbronn lied. 'I belong to an S.S. underground organisation just like you and I have to be mobile.' He had worked out every detail of this explanation beforehand.

Schilling was confused. This was a twist neither he nor Lainz had thought of. 'Why in God's name didn't you say so before?' he snarled.

'We also have to keep on the alert. Our organisation is spread mainly over Austria and its job is to help comrades in danger to slip away to South America. But for purely personal reasons I'm prepared to take part in what you're doing. That is, if it really is something to do with the Nuremberg Trial.' Steinbronn spoke deliberately and unhurriedly, and to Schilling it sounded convincing.

'All right,' he said, 'you can reach me at the meat market. Butchers' Lane is the little alley behind the town hall. If you come from Grass Lane, it's the second stall along. Ask for Vitus. He'll take a message for me.'

'Agreed,' said Steinbronn, 'but are you really sure you can stay underground here in Landshut?'

'At least until you've done your trial job for us, Storm-Troop Commander. You'll be hearing from us,' said Schilling coolly. He turned his back on Steinbronn, and walked off down the steep path in the direction of the Bernlochner Gorge, relying on Peters not to let Steinbronn out of his sight.

Behind one of the slits in the castle wall two eyes beneath bushy brows disappeared. Richard Billsteiner was contented with himself and the world. Now he could pick out the man with whom Steinbronn had been speaking from among a crowd of a hundred. As arranged with Clinton Keen, he appeared for a moment at the Landshut C.I.C. office in order to pass on the man's description. Had he followed Steinbronn, he might perhaps have also discovered the second man and been able to prevent a disaster.

Steinbronn suspected nothing of all this. He went down to St. Martin's Church and once again left a note in Keen's post-box.

Peters watched from behind a pillar as Steinbronn stepped out of the confessional and left the church. It was a simple matter for him to find the piece of paper under the knee-rail.

The note was brief but informative. 'Everything going smoothly - Vitus at the second butcher in the meat market - contact you again.' It was clear to Peters that he had to get in touch with Schilling as quickly as possible.

He reached him just as he was leaving the Moosmüller Boarding House to thumb a lift to Essenbach on the Regensburg Road.

Schilling listened to what Peters had to report and read the piece of paper. There was no doubt in his mind - Steinbronn was a stool-pigeon.

With icy coolness he ordered his thoughts. There was no time

to inform Lainz — he had to act immediately. The responsibility was too great to jeopardise perhaps the entire 'Nuremberg project'. He alone had to make the decision. He had to eliminate any risk to the battle-group.

An hour later Steinbronn was dead.

It had taken them less than ten minutes to get to Achdorf. Every child knew the 'Customs House' Inn. Peters had brought Steinbronn instructions to be at the Isar water-meadows beside the Munich Road at the first milestone in twenty minutes.

Steinbronn was punctual. Nothing about him showed that he knew what it was all about. At a sign from Peters, who was standing concealed in the water-meadows, he leaped awkwardly down into the undergrowth, stumbled towards the bare bushes and parted them with large movements as though he were on the drill-ground.

Schilling was brief.

'Admit that you wanted to spy on our organisation!'

Steinbronn went chalk-white, and his hawk-like head suddenly looked like a skull.

Schilling held out the piece of paper towards him. 'No use denying it!'

'I . . . No . . . ' Steinbronn struggled for breath. His voice gave out.

'Since when is a storm-troop commander a coward! Admit it!' Schilling made it clear he was not prepared to be lied to.

'Yes,' said Steinbronn quietly. 'I admit it. But I was forced to by the C.I.C., I swear it by all that's holy.'

At the last word of the sentence, Schilling pulled the trigger. He kept the Mauser in his coat pocket. He had carefully wound a rag round its muzzle and the shots were considerably muffled.

Steinbronn's body was thrown back, rolled over once and fell clumsily on to some wet vegetation.

With their feet, Schilling and Peters shoved damp earth, twigs, stones and leaves over him, and finished up with their hands until he was completely covered.

It was not until weeks later that an old woman found the corpse. It had already begun to decay.

It was eight miles from Landshut to Essenbach. At about four in the afternoon. Ralf Schilling jumped down from the American truck which had brought him to the edge of the little

town. He waved to the two G.I.s in the driver's cab, and set off to see Werner Ruland.

At that time of the year, all the jobs which had been neglected during the summer and autumn months on the farm had to be attended to.

The day began for Werner at four every morning. And every evening at six o'clock he would crawl into bed, dog-tired.

Werner went into his room and dipped his face in the icy cold water of the china bowl. He picked up the towel and rubbed his face dry.

The heavy work on the farm had done him good and his body had developed solid flesh and muscle; but although he gave the impression of being robust and strong, he was delicate and sensitive none the less. If it had not been for his sister, he would certainly have given up many times before.

He lived for Karin and felt he had to protect her. And it was just where she was concerned that he had shown himself to be a weakling: he had lied to her and exposed her to a terrible danger. He wanted to ask Karin to forget their last conversation. Only then would he once more feel right within himself.

There was a knock.

Ralf Schilling stood at the door. Once again he was wearing his far too long, worn-out military great-coat and kept his right hand in his pocket.

'May I come in?'

'Yes, do.' Werner nodded uneasily.

'I have come to hear you tell me that the business with Karin has been taken care of.'

Werner said nothing, feeling incapable of talking about Karin. Not then, and not with Ralf Schilling.

'You don't seem to understand your position,' said Schilling threateningly, 'I asked you a question.'

'Sit down,' said Werner, 'I'll explain everything to you.'

'To hell with your explanation. We must know what's happening with your sister. Have you spoken to her?'

'Yes,' said Werner in a voice that could scarcely be heard, 'I have.'

'And?' Schilling snapped at him.

'Yes.' Werner nodded, feeling ashamed. He could have spat with contempt for himself.

It was the old fear that swept over him, the feeling he thought he had got over long ago. The pressure that Hitler's Germany

had hammered into him every day. Ralf Schilling had become the long arm of the dead 'Führer' to him.

Werner looked up. He would have given anything to have plucked up the courage to leap on his old school comrade, batter the arrogant expression from his face, and even, if need be, to kill him. But he knew he was too weak for that, too cowardly.

'Is that all you have to say to me?' Schilling's voice cut short his thoughts.

He felt as though he were struggling up to the surface out of a bottomless swamp. 'Leave this farm! At once! And don't ever show yourself here again!'

'But Werner,' said Schilling with an icy smile, 'you can't be serious. You can't be so stupid as to really mean that. I've just come from a discussion which ended unfortunately. Most unfortunately – for the other fellow. Well, he was just a stranger. But *we* are old school friends, and school friends must stick together.' And then suddenly he added, 'Have you ever killed anyone?'

'No,' Werner said calmly, 'Never.'

'I have. Dozens of men! With mortars, rifles, pistols, two with a knife. And I even hanged one of my lads, with my own hands, on the iron shutters of a grocery store. In the last months of the war it was either him or me. I killed so many people that one more or less doesn't make any difference to me now. It's up to you to see that it doesn't come to that!'

'Killing!' Werner put all his contempt in the word. 'Killing, that's all you can do!'

'But we do it to perfection,' said Schilling cynically, 'you must admit that!'

'You haven't learned a thing. You still believe in the final victory. It's time you woke up and realised what pathetic figures you are. It's time you gave up playing soldiers once and for all!'

'In one respect you're right,' said Schilling 'In a way we are still "playing soldiers". But not in a dream! No, it is for one reason only: we recognise that there must continue to be men in our country who take up arms against the injustice which prevails! And we are those men! We alone! Don't make the mistake of underestimating us. Our organisation grows with every day. Not all German men crawl away like cowards. Not all of them let themselves be kicked and humiliated and then

kiss the occupying forces' feet for it. There are still men left who fight! Germany has not yet yielded to its fate! One day you'll regret that you never fought on our side.'

'On your side? On the side of complete delusion!'

'What do you know about it? Is a person deluded when he sees the trial of Nuremberg for what it is – the most outrageous lie the Americans have ever perpetrated?'

'Just the Americans?' said Werner, gathering more confidence. 'Not the entire world?'

'The entire world! Window dressing! Window dressing, that's all your entire world is! This lying trial is nothing but the revenge of the Americans. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth! We're going to put a stop to this degradation of Germany. We're going to give this court its own just sentence!'

'You're all insane.'

'Oh no, my dear Werner, we are quite sane, more than sane. Our judgment is as sharp as a razor. We can distinguish very clearly between men like Kaltenbrunner and Keitel and the other prisoners at Nuremberg, between men who are worth fighting for and men who are not men at all. Take Goering for example. What do you think of Goering?'

'I don't understand your question.'

'You understand it perfectly well. You're just pretending not to understand it. In your view, does Goering belong to our side, or to the side of the idiots and worthless cowards?'

'I work hard fourteen hours a day. I just don't have the time to follow the trial.'

'Oh, so that's your excuse! Very clever. But I'll tell you: Goering is in the balance. He is as unstable as he was throughout the last years. A conceited, fat coward. Nevertheless, now and then he strikes a note that makes people prick up their ears. We're going to keep him under observation a while longer. Then his fate will be decided – by us, Werner, by us alone!'

He had talked himself into such a state of excitement, that he no longer noticed he was indirectly giving away details about his battle group. The urge to convince the other man had made him momentarily cast all caution to the wind.

Werner took note of every word. As soon as he had time to go to Nuremberg, he would report the whole of this conversation to Karin. He would tell her about the man who boasted of the power of his underground organisation, who had walked

into his life out of the mists and would, he was sure, disappear again in the same way.

Into the mists?

An inspiration made him ask: 'How are you going to get home, actually?'

Schilling was taken aback. 'How am I going to get home?'

'Yes.'

'That's a strange question.'

'It's getting on for five. It's getting dark. Are you walking? Going by train? Have you got your own transport?'

'What's it to you?' Schilling became alert. 'Are you worried I might want to spend the night here?'

'Maybe,' Werner lied and then added, 'I just thought, the curfew...'

'Let me reassure you,' laughed Schilling, 'I'll have had time to get back ten times over before the stupid curfew. I've never had to wait more than an hour for a Yankee truck.'

'But if you have to change?'

'Not on that route. Satisfied?'

'Yes,' said Werner, for now he knew enough. From Schilling's replies, it was clear the only place he could be heading for was Landshut. Regensburg, Straubing, Deggendorf and Kelheim were too far off. To get there he would have to change not just once, but several times. And Werner was quite positive that he was not living in one of the smaller towns somewhere. He would not be able to hide out in a little market-centre like Postau, Ergoldsbach or Weihmichel. It was good to know where one's enemy could be found.

'I'll be going now,' said Schilling, buttoning up his coat. 'So the business with Karin is in order?'

Once again, Werner felt himself unable to talk to Schilling about Karin, and his stomach seemed to turn right over.

'Is it or isn't it? Answer me!' Schilling took a step towards him.

'I've already told you once.'

'I want to hear it again! Clearly and concisely! Is it in order?'

'Yes.' Werner looked at him challengingly. 'But in future just leave me alone!'

'That depends on you and you alone, my dear Werner.' Schilling kept his hand on the door-knob. 'As long as you don't give me any trouble, as far as I'm concerned you can play the country bumpkin for the rest of your life!'

Book Two

THE DEFENCE

Chapter Six

She was six years old when the doctors gave up hope for her. The meningitis had already entered the cerebro-spinal stage. Her fever rose to 104.5.

She knew nothing about any of that. She slept.

Whenever her eyes opened, she saw a large, solid hand on the blanket in front of her and felt herself caressed by a deep, melodious voice.

She came to completely for the first time. The large, solid hand stroked her face, full of tenderness. The hand belonged to a man who was sitting to one side on a chair. The man said, 'How nice to see you awake.' His voice sounded deep and pleasant.

With a great effort she turned her head. The man sitting by her bed was her father.

Exhausted, she closed her eyes and fell asleep again. A smile of security spread over her face.

She spent the next fourteen months in a sanatorium near to some large woods. Every Saturday her father came to see her. Once he brought a little bear made of cloth for her, and another time a tiny wooden train. The train was painted light blue and had a hook of gleaming brass.

Her father sat down next to her, told her amusing stories, held her hand and stayed until Sunday evening.

She put up with the treatment during the week without a murmur, looking forward to the weekend.

Her recovery progressed. It was another four weeks to Christmas. Her father brought her an Advent calendar. She asked him about her mother. He told her that her mother was on a journey round the world, a journey that took her to colourful cities.

The fourteen months were over. She was well. The doctors called it a miracle.

Her father came to collect her. They went on a horse-drawn cart to the nearest railway station, and from there they took a

train to a large town. The town was called Breslau. Her father carried her in his strong arms to the tram, and from the tram-stop to a hut in an allotment.

In the evening of that first day at home, her father suddenly became serious. 'I lied to you,' he said, 'your mother is not on a great journey. Your mother died more than a year ago.'

The allotment lay between the two gasholders of Gasworks no. III and Railway Workshop no. II, directly beside the railway-line to Oels. Her father showed her how to grow lettuce and carve a pipe out of elder wood. On Saturdays they went to the town centre, strolled along Ohlau Street and the Ring, and looked at the town hall and the monuments to Frederick the Great and Friedrich Wilhelm III.

At the age of seven, she went to school. After a while, she asked her father why he had so much more time for her than other fathers.

'I'm unemployed,' said her father.

One year later she took over the household duties. She thought herself uglier than her school friends and had no desire to spend her free time with them as well. So her father had time to go out in search of work. But jobs were scarce. He was forced to go on supporting them both on his welfare payments.

In 1929, on her 13th birthday, he came home beaming with joy. He had found some casual work. It was true there weren't any proper wages, but still he got some pocket money which they would find very useful. He was a kind of errand-boy in an office.

Only a few weeks had gone by before he received a free gift of a pair of black trousers, a new white shirt, a thick leather belt with a shoulder strap and a blood-red arm-band with a black swastika in a white circle. He had become a secretary.

She finished elementary school and her father became a platoon commander in the Storm-Troopers, and barely half a year later a company commander. Now he wore brown trousers and a brown shirt. She understood that he hardly had any time left for her.

When he came back to their hut for short periods in between his duties, she had his meal ready, pulled off his heavy boots and brought him a light for his cigarette. Then he stroked her hair, and they knew they were there just for one another.

She got a job as a trainee in the Tietz department store. He was made an *Obersturmführer*.

When she was seventeen years old, she saw him drunk for the first time. That was on the 30th of January 1933.

In April they left the hut in the allotment and moved into a large, bright apartment by the Scheitnig Park. Father said it was a gift from the party for the work he had done.

In June they moved to Berlin. Her father wore a new uniform. It was black and there was a tin skull on the cap. It was the uniform of the police, he explained to her. Of course she had known for a long time that it was the uniform of the *Schutzstaffel*, even though she was not particularly interested in the party. Her father still thought of her as a little girl.

One day she changed her hair-style, made herself up and put on a pullover with a plunging neckline. Then he realised that she was grown up. She had become pretty. He explained the rise of the party to her, and wanted to persuade her to join. She had no desire for that. She was too fond of the pulsating life of the great city of Berlin. She wanted to enjoy it without the pressure of work and responsibilities. Her father let her have her own way.

She was twenty years old. Her father was made a *Sturm-bannführer* and began work in the Foreign Section. The Olympic Games were held in Berlin. She was much sought-after, wore the best clothes, and her father gave her a BMW sports car. She felt as though the whole world belonged to her. She enjoyed life in a great whirl of happiness.

In 1938 her father introduced her to his secretary. 'I am going to marry her.' She felt the coldness with which his future wife looked at her. But she understood that he could not remain alone forever, and took a little flat for herself. At the wedding, the great majority of the guests were in uniform. She fell in love with a young S.S.-officer called Jürgen. They left the wedding party and drove out in her BMW towards the Wannsee. On the Avus Motor Road the car skidded into a tree. Jürgen was thrown clear and escaped with a few fractured ribs. Her life hung in the balance.

Against the will of his wife, her father abandoned his honeymoon and dedicated himself totally to his daughter. He managed to get Professor Sauerbruch to take the case. The operation lasted three hours. After exactly ninety-nine days, she was sitting behind the wheel of a new BMW.

In 1939 the war began. Jürgen had to go to the front. Her father saw her very seldom. On Easter Monday, 1940, he said

goodbye to her. He was taking up important duties in Cracow, he explained. She stayed behind in Berlin on her own.

In the autumn of 1941, she received a letter from Jurgen asking her to be his wife. They decided to get married by proxy. Four weeks after the proxy marriage, the report of his death arrived. 'Fallen for Führer and Fatherland at Safonovo near Moscow.' Her father became a *Standartenführer*.

She took a course in shorthand and typing, enlisted as a volunteer for work at the front, and became an intelligence assistant for the Luftwaffe in Kiev.

One year later she got her first home-leave. Her father was able to arrange things so that they could meet in Berlin. He was now a *Brigadeführer*. His wife remained behind in Cracow. It was an ecstatic reunion. They felt as though they were back in the old days again. They even managed to recapture once again the feelings they had known in the allotment between the gasworks and the railways workshops.

That was the last time she saw her father.

At the end of 1943 the retreat from Russia began. She was transferred to Paris. Ten months later the Allied troops marched into the city. She was taken prisoner by the French.

On the 5th of May 1945 she was driven up a mountain with six thousand other German prisoners-of-war by French maquisards. She was in the Chauvenerie Camp, Depot 91, near Poitiers.

As a woman, she had to do the same heavy physical work as the men. Every day at four o'clock in the morning they were pistol-whipped out on to the Poitiers-Argenton road. At about seven o'clock in the evening they came back into the camp. Often she was too exhausted to eat what little food was provided. After two months she was so thin she frightened herself. She knew that every day dozens of prisoners died of malnutrition and were simply thrown into huge graves.

She joined the so-called 'half-pay unit'. She saw it as the only chance to escape certain death.

Farmers from the neighbourhood came to pick out labourers from the 'half-pay unit'. Anyone who seemed useful to them would be taken back, given lodgings and the camp authorities would be paid ten francs a day for them.

Although women were hardly ever chosen, and she was so weak she could hardly stand up, she was lucky. An old farmer from Loudun stopped in front of her. He told her to open her

mouth. She did so. He estimated her age from the condition of her teeth. Then he turned to the guard and pointed at her. The guard led her to her sleeping-quarters. She wrapped up her bowl in her blanket, went to the barracks of the camp administration and signed out on parole. Come what may, she knew she could never go back there again.

Loudun was a town of about seven thousand inhabitants lying between Poitiers and Tours. After four weeks she had partly recovered her strength.

At her work in the fields she got to know a German prisoner-of-war by the name of Willman who, like herself, had been brought there from Chauvenerie Camp. She made friends with him. He claimed he was a former sergeant in the 4th Company of Paratroop Sapper Battalion no. 1. She didn't care about that. What mattered to her was that she had found a partner with whom she could carry out her plan: to escape from France.

They got hold of peasant clothing, stole 220 francs, and ran off from Loudun in the night of the 8th of August.

On the 2nd of October they crossed the border at Moulin Neuf and reached Lauterbach. The 'sergeant' admitted to her that he was actually called Rainer Harst, had been a *Obersturmführer* in the Waffen-S.S. and had had the good luck not to have been given the blood-group tattoo under his arm.

She told him her father's name. He said he had heard nothing but great things about him. He took her along to the apartment of a former member of the S.S. from whom they received new clothes and a certain amount of money.

Harst suggested to her that she should make her way to Neckargemünd with him. A man called Delius had a sawmill there. He told her there was a chance of finding out something about her father's fate from him.

On the day they were due to leave, she bought herself some lipstick in a chemist shop. As she left the shop, a hand was laid on her shoulder. A French military policeman asked her for her identity card. She did not have one. He took her back to the barracks for interrogation. She refused to answer any questions.

They took her in a Citroën to nearby Saarbrücken. In number 7 Heine Street were the offices of the Brigade de la Surveillance du Territoire, where the hook-nosed Commissaire Rebrière took her into custody. He was well-disposed towards her. Why, she was never to know.

He asked her what her name was and she gave the name she

had gone under since her marriage by proxy.

He offered her the chance of working for him as an agent provocateur instead of being sent to a French prison camp. She agreed, with the secret intention of using the connection to discover the whereabouts of her father.

Two weeks later she succeeded: she discovered that her father was a prisoner of the British in the Bad Nenndorf Special Internment Camp, and was considered to be one of the great war-criminals. When she heard in detail about the crimes with which he was charged, she felt as though her heart would give out.

She did not believe it. She could not believe it. To her, her father was still the man who had taught her how to grow lettuces and make pipes out of elder-wood. All her life her father had been good to her.

She decided she would go to Bad Nenndorf and set him free from his prison. That same night she crossed the Saarland border near Bruchmühlbach into Germany, heading for Neckargemünd.

The man called Delius no longer existed, but at the saw-mill they had heard of a man whose name was Willmann who had been asking for Delius about three weeks before. He had said he was going on to Sinsheim.

At Sinsheim she found him. Harst had meanwhile heard about her father through former S.S. comrades. He also knew what kind of reputation the Bad Nenndorf Special Internment Camp had; there were tales of prisoners being induced to make confessions by beatings, cold water showers and deprivation of their rations.

She told him about her plan, and asked him to help her. 'There's only one man for that,' he said, 'Hemmersbach.'

He took her to Frankfurt and introduced her to former S.S.-*Standartenführer* Hemmersbach, now living underground.

He subjected her to an interrogation. 'What is your father's full name?'

'Heinrich Franz Olciomek.'

'Correct. And his wife?'

'My mother?'

'No, the second.'

'Gerda. Maiden name Krones. Is she still alive?'

'We don't know that. And your name?'

'After my proxy marriage?'

'Yes.'

'Bernsdorff. Ingeborg Bernsdorff.'

'In what year did your father come to Berlin?'

'Let me work it out.' Then she told him.

'That's right. So far as I remember, your father had a particular favourite dish. Do you know it by any chance - ?'

'*Schur*, goat soup, on mashed potatoes,' she said spontaneously.

'Yes,' he said, 'that will do.'

For a few weeks she lived in the apartment of one of Hemmersbach's henchmen. She received training in the use of pistols, rifles, hand grenades and the MG 43 automatic rifle. She could not wait any longer to get her father out of prison.

Hemmersbach told her she would still have to be patient. There was a large-scale, unified operation being planned, but the time had not yet arrived. She was photographed.

After what seemed to her further endless weeks of inactivity, Hemmersbach came to see her in her flat one rainy Sunday morning.

'Here' He held out a passport to her. 'This is your new name. It took a bit of time to get it fixed up. But we have to avoid every possible risk. You were born in Dresden.'

'I understand.' She glanced at the photo. It was one of the pictures they had taken of her.

'I hope you like it,' said Hemmersbach.

'Yes,' she said, indifferent. And she went on urgently, 'How is my father? I can't stand any more of this waiting.'

'We have received a report that your father is to be transferred to Dachau.'

'To Dachau?'

'It seems that they are preparing exclusive trials for high-ranking S.S. leaders there.'

'What can he expect there?'

'Judging by the trial in Landsberg, the death sentence.'

'The death sentence?' She was numbed 'I can't stand it here any more! I can't let my father be treated that way! I have to get him out, don't you understand?'

'I promised you you would. And I shall keep to my word. We shall get your father out. As soon as he's been taken to the American Zone, as soon as he's in Dachau, our plan goes into action.'

'Why not before then?'

'In our zone we hold all the strings. In Bad Nenndorf it might well go wrong.'

'And not here?' She spoke with a mixture of doubt and hope.

'No,' said Hemmersbach. 'Here in the American Zone I can give you my personal guarantee that the operation will be successful.'

'When is my father supposed to be transferred?'

'It could be any day now. In a week. In two. We'll have to wait and see. But your special duty begins today.'

'Today?' Her cheeks glowed.

'Yes. You'll be travelling to Munich today, with no luggage. All your personal belongings you will leave behind here in the flat. All of them, do you understand? The mission is too risky. Apart from your passport, you will take nothing with you.' He threw a brief glance in the direction of the bureau where a yellowed photograph of her father in a little frame was standing.

'You hear me? Nothing, but absolutely nothing personal! You must promise me that. No letters. No documents, no matter how unimportant. And no photos?'

'I promise. What do I have to do in Munich?'

'You will go to Herzog Rudolf Street. It is a turning off Maximilian Street. At number two you go up the front staircase. On the first floor there is a sign with the name "Peikert" on it by the left-hand door. At Herr Peikert's you will ask for Barbarossa and bring a greeting from Knife. Everything else will follow. Do you understand?'

'Yes,' she said, and she repeated the mission.

'One more thing,' he said. 'You may only act on your orders. Not on your own initiative!'

'You can depend on me.'

On the 8th of March 1946, she stood in front of number 2 Herzog Rudolf Street, Munich. She went through the main door, greeted by a smell of decay, and went up the steep, winding wooden staircase. The boards creaked.

The door to the apartment had a window with a grille and a curtain on the inside. Underneath the window was the opening of the letter-box, and beside the letter-box a cardboard sign was fastened to the door with drawing-pins. On it was written 'Peikert'.

She pressed the brass button.

After some time she heard the sound of shuffling footsteps. A

man with snow-white hair opened the door a crack. 'What do you want?'

'I would like to speak to Barbarossa.'

'One moment.' The old man closed the door.

She heard another door being opened, then more footsteps, this time quiet and cautious. She felt as though she were being observed through a peep-hole.

When the door was opened again, a thickset man in his shirt-sleeves and braces stood before her. His face was full of energy. His hair was grey-blond. It was former *Hauptsturmführer* Ulrich Lainz.

With one hand he held the door, while he kept the other more or less concealed behind his back. He took a quick glance down the stairway to make sure she was alone.

'I have a greeting for you from Knife.'

'Who are you?' he asked.

'My name is Gisela Silinski,' she said.

Dr. Gebhard Vesenstedt prepared himself for the hearing of witnesses for the defence.

It was eight o'clock in the morning. He sat in his winter coat at the desk in his ice-cold room, going through the hectographed proceedings against 'Berger', and taking notes.

Barbara came from her bath. 'You'll catch cold.'

Vesenstedt looked up. 'You're already dressed?'

'Do you really think there's any point in hearing witnesses for your client?' She half-sat on the edge of the table. 'Aren't you afraid he might stab you in the back?'

'You mean because he has retracted his plea of "not guilty" in court?'

'Yes. With one sentence he can undo your entire work.'

'No, he won't do that. Look, Barbara, I'm not concerned with the whole complex. I'm concerned with important individual points. Points which clarify the position of my client, and which are decisive for the organisations.'

'But if with that one sentence, "I take full responsibility upon myself" -'

'- But it's still far from proven how he came by this guilt.'

'Is that at all important?'

'It's of the utmost importance. Hitler could not have just stood up and absolved the nation of its share of guilt by assuming the entire responsibility himself, and neither can my client.

First of all there are serious consequences for his subordinates, in other words the organisations; and secondly, his silence on all questions could have important repercussions for his co-defendants.'

'You've convinced me. Shall we go out for our Nescafé now? Otherwise I'll die of hunger.'

'That's a good enough reason.'

He closed the folder, slipped it with his notes into the portfolio and stood up.

'I never asked you how you got on in Rodach yesterday?' She went into the next room to fetch her coat.

He did not want to be reminded of it. The visit to Rodach weighed heavily on him. In two days he would have to sit in front of 'Berger' and tell him about it. He did not want to think about that now. The presentation of evidence began on the 8th of March at ten o'clock in the morning.

It was the same day that the girl who now called herself Gisela Silinski met the former *Hauptsturmführer* Ulrich Lainz.

Raoul Clairon hurried across the yard in front of the law-courts, consumed with excitement at the thought that from now on he would be able at last to destroy the defence with his mordant criticism.

Beside and a little behind him was Karin Ruland. She was scarcely able to keep up with him.

At one of the high windows of the second storey stood Lieutenant Bob Hammersmith. He watched as Karin hurried up the steps to the entrance and disappeared inside the door. He made up his mind that today he would finally bring about a chance meeting.

Clinton Keen went into his bathroom and turned the shower full on. He was pleased with himself. Since he had sent in the report to Bamberg, the weight of conscience had been lifted from him, and not even the news of Steinbronn's murder had been able to change that. To be on the safe side, he had kept Billsteiner on in Landshut, but without any tangible success. The supposed conspirators seemed to have evaporated into thin air.

Clinton let the water pelt down against his body. His thoughts were still occupied with the previous evening. He had been with Bob in the mess, as he had almost every evening. Bob had brought the conversation round to the subject of Karin Ruland.

Without really being able to explain why, Clinton had suddenly felt a desire to see the girl again.

Now, as the cold jet of the shower shocked his mind into activity, he thought he could explain this desire. It was nothing more than paying back a still-unsettled score, he told himself; on two occasions Karin Ruland had got the better of him. Her apparently case-hardened toughness fascinated him. That very afternoon he would arrange to see her again.

Ulrich Lainz had invited Gisela Silinski into the apartment. Now she was sitting on the plush sofa with its worn-out cover and collapsing springs. Lainz had explained her task in broad outline.

'Don't you accept the job then?' His voice sounded cool. From the start he had been against using a woman. In his opinion women had no business getting mixed up in this operation and he had appealed to 'Command' in vain to do without her. A woman was too great a risk, and besides, they could have reconnoitred the situation without her. But now the entire plan depended on her, and there was nothing to be done about it.

'Are you afraid all of a sudden?' he asked.

She looked up. 'No.'

'What's the matter then? Were you expecting a more important role? More action? More romance?' He laughed disparagingly.

'No,' she said tonelessly, 'I had hoped to be able to set my father free.'

'Your father?'

She told him about Bad Nenndorf, about the expected transfer to Dachau, her unyielding determination to get her father out of prison at all costs.

He stood with his back to the window, his arms folded over his chest, and waited till she had finished.

He felt that what she had told him only confirmed what he had thought: it was taking a risk to carry out the operation with a woman, especially when her motives were personal.

He wondered whether he should not try one last time to persuade the men of 'Command' to change their minds, but rejected the thought. He knew the objections: they were relying on feminine psychology, emotional insight, and the well-tried 'love' factor.

It was just a test for them, an evaluation of the situation. If she was unsuccessful, they would cancel the whole operation.

'Your father will be set free, you can be sure of that. Our operation is aimed not only at Nuremberg but at ten different points in the zone. Dachau being one of them. But we can't risk sending you in to Dachau: the "Dachau operation" is being carried out by direct assault and the group we've assigned to it is particularly strong. You're the only woman we've chosen. The "Edelweiss" battle-group has been designated to the Nuremberg law-courts, and there are only seven of us. Now, it would be senseless to try and attack the court-room with only seven men, so Battle-Group Edelweiss has to proceed along psychological lines – and this is where you play the decisive part. The total operation can only succeed if the separate operations mesh perfectly. If the attack on the court comes off, then the liberation of your father will succeed as well. Don't you see how indispensable your task will be? For your father as well?'

'Yes.' She swallowed. He saw that it would still take a while before she would abandon the idea of personally getting her father out of the camp.

'You can sleep here for a few days. Then you will go to Nuremberg. One of our men, Schilling, will be nearby. He will show you your lodgings and arrange for your meeting with Clairon's secretary. I will decide at what time you go into action, but the sooner you carry out your task, the sooner the total operation can begin.'

'And what's the name of the American I'm supposed to – make up to?'

'A young lieutenant. He's in the guard detail and he's pretty naive, but you mustn't rush things. We can only go ahead when you have him completely under your thumb.'

'I understand. And what happens if he gets moved out for any reason? Should I decide on my own – ?'

'No! Then you get fresh orders. I'm going to cook us some soup now. In Munich, the ration is dried vegetable soup.'

'Can I help you with it?'

'Definitely not.' He raised both his hands, and went out into the kitchen.

Ingeborg Bersdorff, née Olciomek, now Gisela Silinski, was alone. She took a good look round at the furniture in the room, at the bureau with its heavy turned pillars, the round mirror, the

photos in little frames which covered an entire wall, the table in the middle of the room, the vase in the shape of a tulip.

It was a good thing after all, she decided, that she had landed up here and had not tried to get her father out on her own four months ago.

Little by little she got used to the idea that she was of more help in freeing him by staying in the background.

Chapter Seven

Special Internment Camp of the British Army Bad Nenn-
dorf. Document II/187/4.

Heinrich Franz Olciomek.

Born November 22nd 1889 in Peiskretscham near Gleiwitz.

Married to Anna Wistok November 4th 1913.

Anna Wistok died March 13th 1921.

Married to Gerda Krones May 10th 1938.

One child by Anna Wistok: Ingeborg Olciomek.

Ingeborg Olciomek married to S.S.-*Untersturmführer*

Jürgen Bernsdorff October 3rd 1941.

Olciomek's highest rank: S.S.-*Brigadeführer*. Envoy in the
Foreign Section. 'High-ranking S.S. leader' and head of the
Security Police in the Extended Region of Cracow.

N.S.D.A.P.: Joined May 11th 1929.

S.A.: Joined May 12th 1929.

S.S.: Joined July 5th 1933.

Charges

1. *Conspiracy*: As a high-ranking S.S. leader and member of the Foreign Section, Olciomek was an organiser, instigator and active participant in the elaboration and implementation of a general plan which had the purpose of oppressing the nations of Europe.

2. *Crimes against Peace*: As a high-ranking S.S. leader and head of the Security Police in the Extended Region of Cracow, Olciomek was an instigator and perpetrator of the invasion of Poland.

3. *War Crimes*: As a high-ranking S.S. leader and head of the Security Police in Cracow, Olciomek was responsible for the murder and mistreatment of the population in occupied areas, which includes shooting, hanging, starvation, excessive overcrowding, deliberate undernourishment, inadequate hygiene, beating, torture and experiments. In addition to this he is charged with the mass-murder of groups of Jews and Poles,

arrest and detention without due process and inhuman imprisonment in concentration camps.

4. *Crimes against Humanity*: This count of the indictment is an extension of count 3. and covers the murder, extermination, enslavement and deportation of the civilian population before or during the war, and persecution on political, racial or religious grounds.

On counts 1. and 2.: Olciomek took part in the notorious Wannsee Conference of January 20th 1942. Here S.S.-*Obergruppenfuhrer* and Chief of the Security Police Reinhard Heydrich made, among others, the following statements regarding the 'final solution':

'The final solution of the European Jewish question concerns about 11 million Jews.

Those Jews capable of working will be sent to large labour-colonies in the eastern regions where the sexes will be separated and they will be used on road-construction, due to which without doubt a large proportion will be removed by natural attrition.

Those who eventually remain will have to be treated in such manner that these, representing a natural selection, will be capable of serving as the germ-cell of a new Jewish rebuilding.'

On counts 3. and 4.: As a high-ranking S.S. leader in the Extended Region of Cracow he was the superior party responsible for the concentration camps of Maidanek and Treblinka. Olciomek rejected, among others, a protest from Archbishop Sapieha of Cracow against the inhuman conditions in both camps. He told the Archbishop he had personally assured himself of the contrary.

Witnesses Maria Lomza and Leo Gregor have stated under oath that Olciomek himself shot before their very eyes three prisoners with a pistol at the Treblinka camp on January 15th 1944. Apparently he wanted to show his subordinates that they were still far too humane.

Sentence for Olciomek demanded by the prosecutor: Death by hanging.

For one last time Vesenstedt explained to himself why it seemed wise to confront his client with the full truth about his son, as

he went down the steps to the two interview-rooms.

Was his client not in a condition where the slightest inner impulse was enough to cause some unpremeditated action? In other words, how strong was 'Berger's' will to live? More importantly, in this condition did he not have a right to hear the full story?

The cubicles in the interview-room had been changed. The upper part of the wire grille was replaced by glass. The two people could see each other better now.

'Berger' was already sitting in his place.

Vesenstedt nodded to him and moved his chair to a convenient position. The guard, who was sitting next to him, also moved his chair.

'I need your agreement to my presentation of witnesses,' Vesenstedt began.

'I know,' said 'Berger'. He seemed to Vesenstedt to be even more apathetic now than during the sessions.

'Do you agree that I should name only one witness?' said Vesenstedt.

'Yes.'

'Your co-defendant Frank.'

'Frank?'

'For you the most dangerous points in the indictment are those which concern your activity in Polish territory. As the leading member of the German government there, Frank must be in the best position to know the situation.'

'Have you already asked him?'

'That's not allowed. I can only speak to his defence counsel, Dr. Seidl. But first I wanted your permission.'

'I don't know.' 'Berger' hesitated. He looked to one side, wanting to make sure that Frank was out of earshot. 'It's hard to judge Frank. His remorse is too general for my liking.'

'That's my opinion too. I would put my questions with that in mind.'

'You talk to Dr. Seidl.'

'The next point - ' Vesenstedt glanced briefly at his notes. 'Do you not wish to suggest an additional witness yourself who could give an account of the official channels both inside and outside your ministry?' He looked up.

'Meaning that these channels might have passed me over - '

'It wouldn't only apply to you personally.'

'If they really went over my head, then I'm responsible for

that. No one can free me of that guilt.'

'I know your view. But may I repeat, there are three aspects involved: the particular charges against you, the Allied law number ten, according to which mere membership of an organisation is punishable as a crime, and the charge of the collective guilt of the nation.'

'I don't understand what the official channels of my ministry could have to do with that?'

'You might perhaps be able to prove that not even in one of the most important ministries did those in key positions know everything that was going on; the fragmentation of responsibility and preservation of secrecy could have been so skilfully and perfectly managed that it would be impossible for every single member of an organisation to be held responsible – let alone every member of an entire nation.'

'I do see what you're saying. Perhaps you will succeed in finding a credible person who worked in my ministry. I don't know of any.'

More and more clearly Vesenstedt realised how strongly his client was resisting the presentation of any kind of witness at all. He was close to considering withdrawing from the defence all over again, this time for the purely juridical reason that when a client gives himself up for lost, the ground is pulled from under the defending counsel's feet. His father-in-law had repeated that good advice to him often enough. It was only the counter-argument of Barbara's which made him push that consideration aside.

'There are also a few documents we have to discuss upon which I'm basing my presentation of evidence.' He passed three sheets of paper to the guard who sat next to him. The guard looked through them, and gave them back. He pushed them through the slit to his client.

The first one was signed by 'Berger'. It contained clear instructions for the treatment of forced labourers in the industries directly under the control of his department in the region of Chernovitz. Nothing in the order suggested any kind of inhumanity.

The two other documents were monthly figures of the labour force under his control. It covered those capable of work, the sick and the dead. The number of sick and dead corresponded exactly to what would normally be expected under natural circumstances.

'Where did you get these from?'

'By a roundabout route via the counsel for Sauckel.'

'And how did he come by them?'

'Now you're asking too much. Perhaps Sauckel is prepared to fight to the last to save his skin?'

'Berger' pushed the documents back. 'I'm not in favour of using them.'

'And why not?'

'Because they might be forged.'

'But they're not forged!'

'And how are you going to prove that?'

'You'll confirm it under oath!'

The two men looked at one another.

Neither said a word. Each knew what was going on in the other's mind.

'What's the weather like?' 'Berger' hung his head.

'The weather?' Vesenstedt realised what 'Berger' would ask him next. As if hoping to ward off the question, he described the weather in detail.

'Freezing, you say? And slush?'

'And dull and overcast with rain from time to time,' said Vesenstedt, 'foul weather.'

'You couldn't ask anybody to take a journey into the unknown in weather like that, I don't suppose.'

'Oh yes,' said Vesenstedt, 'I was there.'

'You saw Claudius?' 'Berger's' face lit up.

'Yes,' said Vesenstedt, 'I got the address from your wife and went to Rodach and saw your son.'

'Did you speak to him as well?'

'Yes, I spoke to him.'

'Well? Tell me! How did he look? How is he?'

'He looks fine. Good and strong and well-grown. He's living with a woman your wife knows.'

'In Rodach, you say?'

'Yes.'

'Then maybe that would be Frau Günther?'

'Yes, Frau Günther. Your son lives very comfortably with her. He has a lot of friends and lives the life of a normal fourteen-year-old-boy.'

'Does he go to school?'

'Yes, he goes to school in Coburg. Frau Günther told me he's an excellent student.'

'Did you tell Claudius who you were?'

'No. I told him I was a friend of your wife's.'

'Tell me what he said. Did he – did he ask? About me?'

'Yes, he did ask. I told him that you think about him a great deal. That you know how good he is at school. That you follow everything he does very carefully. And that you are very much looking forward to being with him again soon.'

'You told him I will soon be – ?'

'Yes. I considered it the right thing. The boy is very fond of you.'

'I knew it,' said 'Berger' as though to himself. 'I always knew he was fond of me.' He raised his eyes. 'Did he also ask you why I am here – ?'

'He didn't ask me about that, only if I knew how you were. If I knew how you looked and if you have enough to read.'

'If I have enough to read? So he knows, then?'

'Yes, he knows.'

'Who from? From the radio? From the newspapers?'

'Possibly from the radio and the newspapers as well.'

'Who else? Tell me! From Frau Günther?'

'From his friends.'

'His friends? Dr. Vesenstedt, you're hiding something from me! I can tell!'

Vesenstedt pulled himself together. 'He had an argument with his friends.' He looked the man opposite straight in the eyes.

'Over me?'

'Yes. His friends showed him a photograph of you in the court-room.'

'And?'

'They taunted him. The way boys do. He defended you. A fight broke out and he gave a couple of lads a beating.'

'And what happened to him?'

'He was slightly injured.'

'Injured? Seriously?'

'I just told you, slightly. On his arm. He's got a bandage on it. He's proud of it. Of the bandage – and of his father.'

'Proud. I always knew he was fond of me.' 'Berger' wiped his eyes. 'I'm very grateful to you,' he said.

Vesenstedt nodded to him and gathered up his documents. The interview was over.

How he finally managed to get from the interview-room out

into Fürth Street, he could not afterwards recall. There was a pounding in his brain. As though in a trance he walked in the direction of the Plärrer. He felt revolted by himself. He had been a coward again and had not had the heart to tell 'Berger' the truth about what had happened that day in Rodach.

Rodach was a little town on the edge of Upper Franconia, just outside Coburg. The steep gables of the half-timbered houses gave the streets their distinctive appearance. Rodach was a haven of peace and quiet, until a few weeks before the end of the war fear had spread through the town. The German Major Hans Habel had taken command in Rodach. He was determined to defend the town to the last man.

With the remnants of the People's Militia and a few S.S.-men who had been separated from their units, he set up a defensive line. He had trenches dug and prepared for the battle of his life.

Against the will of the citizens of Rodach. Looking ahead to the imminent end of the war and trying to preserve their town from senseless destruction, they raised white flags.

Major Hans Habel proved unrelenting. He set up a court-martial and condemned the 'treacherous citizens' to death by hanging. Only the sudden arrival of U.S. troops saved them from their fate. Major Hans Habel made good his escape.

One year later almost to the day, Habel came back to Rodach. He thought no one had recognised him, as he tried to recover the rucksack he had hidden in a barn. But the people of Rodach whom he had condemned managed to arrest him and locked him up in the same room in which they themselves had faced death one year before.

The news of Habel's arrest spread through the town like wild-fire. It was a great day for Rodach.

It was on this day, Sunday, the 3rd of March 1946, that Dr. Gebhard Vesenstedt came to find out about Claudius.

Since all attention was focused on the former last-ditch commandant, his visit was not noticed by the people there.

First of all, Vesenstedt went to see Frau Günther, who lived close to the technical school. He talked to her and was told that Claudius was following the trial in Nuremberg very closely, and was greatly distressed by the charges brought against his father.

'Can I speak to him?' asked Vesenstedt.

'He's gone to see some friends,' she said, and described the

boy and explained to him where the friends lived.

Meanwhile Claudius was walking along the path behind the brewery. He was a slightly-built lad with short blond hair whose features resembled those of his father.

He was met by two boys he knew from the secondary school in Coburg. One was eighteen years old, and the other nineteen. They had both been fanatical leaders in the Hitler Youth and were still zealous defenders of the National Socialist cause. The boys spoke to Claudius, congratulating him on the activities which the Nuremberg court was accusing his father of. One of them said: 'If everyone had got rid of as many Jews as your father, the war wouldn't have been lost!'

Suddenly Claudius flew into a rage. He began gasping for breath. Everything began to swim in front of him. He shouted back: 'My father . . . ! I don't want anything to do with him! Why don't you go to hell!'

'Come on now,' warned the nineteen-year-old. 'You don't know what you're talking about.'

'I know exactly what I'm talking about. He's not my father any more as far as I'm concerned. And you are swine, nothing but stupid, dirty Nazi swine!'

The eighteen-year-old punched him in the face, and Claudius fell to the ground with blood running from his nose. He struggled to his feet, ramming his head into his opponent's stomach. The older of the two boys came to his friend's rescue. A blow with both fists struck the back of Claudius's head. He collapsed, pulled himself up, and was hit by the eighteen-year-old's heel.

His lips were split and bleeding, and his head burning like fire. With his last remaining strength he got up again and threw himself on the nineteen-year-old, shouting in desperation 'Dirty Nazi swine!' Then one pulled a loose board from the fence bordering the path, and with all his might hit him on the head.

Two rusty nails were sticking out of the board. They pierced through the roof of his skull close to the parietal bone, injuring the cavities at the base of the skull.

The boys ran off.

A few minutes later Vesenstedt arrived on the scene. He saw Claudius from some way off, lying on his back, unconscious, his face covered in blood.

Vesenstedt laid him flat on his side. A little boy came along. Vesenstedt sent him to the nearest doctor.

The doctor appeared, diagnosed a fracture of the base of the skull, and took Claudius in his car to the county hospital in Coburg. Claudius was operated on. Early in the evening, he recovered consciousness briefly. He said something about 'two boys from the secondary school' and gave a name.

Vesenstedt spent the night in the hospital. Next morning he spoke to the headmaster of the school. The two boys were found and told the headmaster about the incident. They did not show the slightest trace of understanding of the situation, let alone remorse.

Before Vesenstedt went back to Nuremberg, he visited the hospital once more. The doctor on the case shook his head doubtfully: 'It looks bad. I don't think he will pull through.'

Karin Ruland was surprised. This time when they reached the suburb of Erlenstegen, Keen did not take her to number 4 Kneipp Street, but to the house next door.

'This is where I live,' said Clinton and took her coat and handbag. 'After you - ' He pointed the way to the living-room. 'Can I offer you a drink?'

'A drink?'

'Manhattan. Bloody Mary.'

She had not been surprised when he had come up to her during the lunch-time recess and asked if she could answer some more questions when the afternoon session was over. Neither did she think anything of it when he took her to Erlenstegen and Kneipp Street again.

But she had not been expecting the offer of a drink. She could only explain it as part of a particularly cunning style of interrogation, and resolved to be on her guard.

Clinton cast a quick glance over her. He went to the serving-trolley on which the bottles were standing. A remarkable girl, he thought. In appearance just about as German as any German could manage to be, and yet in her casual way more attractive than many of the Parisian girls he had got to know while he was stationed in the 7th Arrondissement.

He wondered whether he had been right to bring her here. He could have held a sham interrogation in his office or else cancelled the appointment at the last moment. He realised he was now faced with a problem. She was after all a German, no matter how attractive she seemed to him, and he did not want to have anything to do with any German, unless to use her the

way his colleagues used *fräuleins* – use them, pay them, and send them away. He was prepared to do likewise.

‘Manhattan? Bloody Mary? Or perhaps a beer?’

‘If I really have to drink something, I’d like a beer.’

He opened two cans, poured the contents into glasses, and handed her one. ‘What do you say in Germany? Prost!’ It was supposed to sound slighting, but she took it jovially.

‘You Americans are funny. You claim to be from the most advanced country in the world, and yet you’ve got complexes up to your eyes.’

His face coloured with irritation. ‘And you Germans sing “*Deutschland über alles in der Welt*” and use this arrogance as an excuse for killing seven million Jews!’

She put her glass on the table, looking at him with disgust. ‘You wanted to interrogate me. Please ask your questions.’

‘It’s not exactly something new for a German not to be able to stand the truth,’ he persisted.

‘It’s something quite new to me to be offered a beer and be told at the same time that I have killed seven million Jews.’

‘Have *I* got to live with that, or you?’

‘If you’re going to put the question as clumsily as that, then I’d say all of us have got to live with it.’

‘Typical German sophistry! That’s the way Goering’s trying to get his head out of the noose!’

‘I haven’t got my head in a noose. Nevertheless, that’s my opinion.’

‘Because you still haven’t learned any better.’

‘Who from, then? From the Americans, I suppose?’

‘Quite right, from the Americans! You of all people should know that – you’re sitting right in the middle of the trial.’

‘Oh, don’t talk to me about the trial! It’s not a question of black and white, it’s grey against grey.’

‘German fantasies!’

‘Reality. Or didn’t you realise that the Russians simply made up that great indictment about Katyn? They must have been glad afterwards that the judges didn’t allow the shooting of seven thousand Polish officers to be more closely investigated.’

‘A German diversionary manoeuvre.’

‘Who brought the subject of Katyn up? The Russians or the Germans?’

‘The Russians had to defend themselves against the insinuation that they had committed the murders.’

'Didn't an independent commission of doctors examine the graves? Didn't doctors from Belgium, Switzerland, Hungary and Holland positively establish when the shootings took place? A time when Katyn was still in the hands of the Russians! And didn't the Russians then drop their charges?'

'Are you trying to say that a murder is less of a crime because someone else has committed murder too?'

'Of course I'm not saying that, and you know it. I'm just against having to see the trial from one side only. And I'm against the collective guilt that you want to pin on us.'

'I didn't say anything about collective guilt.'

'You associated me with the murder of seven million Jews.'

'And you associated me with the complexes of some of my fellow countrymen.' Clinton had calmed down. He could see that it was pointless to continue the conversation along those lines. He raised his glass. 'Cheers!'

'Prost!'

They drank. He kept his glass in his hand. 'You're a tough opponent.'

'I don't enjoy arguing with you.'

'What's your first name?'

'Karin. Why?'

'A typically German name.'

'You're wrong. It's the Swedish shortened form of the Greek name Katharina. And what's yours?'

'Clinton.'

'Typically American. Am I right?'

'Yes,' he said, and couldn't help laughing, 'you're right.'

The conversation continued more peacefully. Clinton told her about Texarkana, about his German father, his grandparents and their tragic fate in the camp near Papenburg.

Karin was grateful. Now at least she could understand his hatred for everything German. She felt sorry for him.

She told him about Berlin, her flight with Werner, their time in Essenbach and the meeting with Raoul Clairon.

They drank beer, and as they talked they never took their eyes off one another. Little by little he found her appearance showed more Swedish than German characteristics. She was taken with his open way of laughing.

It had grown dark outside when she asked him to take her home. 'I still have some washing to do and a little bit of sewing.'

'You don't have to cook dumplings?' he said, and there was still a slight note of anti-German revulsion in his irony. 'I thought Germans only stuffed their bellies full of rock-hard dumplings.' He saw that his gibe was out of place, and tried to make it look like a joke that had not come off.

She was not annoyed. Since he had told her the story of his grandparents, he could not wound her any more.

'Dumplings don't necessarily have to be rock-hard,' she said. 'You must have been unlucky.'

'I've never tried any.'

'You pronounce judgment on dumplings, and you've never eaten any?'

'Dumplings aren't included on the menu of the American Army. And I've never been to a German restaurant.'

'Then you should have some cooked for you at home.'

'Who by? Joe?'

'If there's really no way of avoiding it, then by me.'

'So you're a dumpling specialist?'

'No. I only learned to cook them in Essenbach.' She rattled off the recipe. 'One pound of raw potatoes. Ten grammes of salt. One egg. Two hundred grammes of flour. A little milk. Grate the peeled potatoes. Press them out in a cloth. Add the salt, egg, flour and milk. Knead the dough. Shape the dumplings in the hand. Cook in boiling water for six to eight minutes. Serve. When do I go into action?'

'Tomorrow evening. I'll pick you up at the same time as today. Okay?'

'Okay.' She was shocked.

It was only now that she realised that Clinton had not held an interrogation.

As they had arranged, he picked her up next day and brought her back home. 'After you - !' With a grand gesture, he opened the door to the kitchen.

For the time it took to draw one breath, she looked in astonishment, and then burst out into peals of laughter.

Standing in a neat row on the table were the ingredients for dumplings: A sack of twenty pounds of potatoes. A bag containing four pounds of salt. A basket full of eggs. A twenty-pound sack of flour. And a heavy iron jug of fresh cows' milk.

The dumplings were a great success. The following evening they repeated it with the same enthusiasm in Karin's apartment.

After that, they spent every one of Clinton's free evenings together. Mostly at his place in order to elude the military police patrols, as the ban on fraternisation was still in force.

'Hasn't Bob asked you?' she said.

'Why I don't have time for him any more?' he said.

'Yes.'

'No.'

Then one evening they missed the beginning of curfew.

'Shall we chance it and risk getting stopped?' he asked.

'No,' she said, 'I couldn't take that responsibility.'

'Then there's nothing for it; I'll have to set up camp in the living-room.'

As she lay in bed, there was a discreet knock on the bedroom door. She said nothing. She had switched off the light, and was dreaming with her eyes open looking up at the ceiling. She knew she had to make a decision.

She did not find it hard. By the time she had offered to make him potato dumplings, she had known she was not indifferent to him, and in the last few days it had become quite clear that they got along well together. Day by day, she had felt the longing to have him more to herself grow stronger. She knew that she had already made the decision long before.

He knocked again. As she still said nothing, he quietly opened the door. The light in the hallway behind him outlined his body. He was naked.

'Come in,' she said, 'you'll catch cold.' She held back the blankets for him.

When he fell asleep, it was already slowly beginning to get light outside. Just after seven o'clock she slipped out of bed and tiptoed out of the room. She made some strong coffee in the kitchen, drank a cup of it and put a cosy over the pot, made a few sandwiches and put them on the serving-trolley with a cup, some milk and some sugar. Then, with the last of her lipstick, she wrote the word OKAY in large letters on a piece of paper, propped the sheet up between the cup and the coffee-pot, and put the trolley in front of the door to the bedroom. She tidied herself up in the bathroom and got dressed. When she walked out of the front-door, Clinton was still asleep.

It took her half an hour to reach the next tram-stop. She arrived at the law-courts at about nine o'clock. She went into the journalists' canteen and had breakfast. It seemed to her as if the world about her was quite changed.

Peters drove the 2-litre Adler to the side of the road. Ralf Schilling, who was sitting in the back with Gisela Silinski, leaned forward.

‘What’s the matter?’

‘You can see for yourself. It’s boiling!’ Peters jumped out, whipped the bonnet open and twisted the radiator cap. A column of steam shot up in front of him.

They were a short distance from Nuremberg, about as far as Feucht.

‘Shall I try to get hold of some water?’ Gisela already had her hand on the handle of the door.

‘You stay here! I’ll do that!’ Schilling leaped violently out of the car.

‘Don’t you think I’m capable of it?’

He already had a ‘no’ on his lips, but swallowed it and went off as though he had not heard her question. He thought she might give herself away even in a harmless conversation.

He had adopted this opinion from Ulrich Lainz. Like him, he was strictly against a woman playing an important part in their operation and had protested against her involvement to the very last. Though with the difference that, unlike Lainz, he was attracted to her.

To him, she seemed the very essence of a sensual woman, and sensual women had always set him in a state of agonising agitation. It was unpleasant for him to remember his feelings when Gisela Silinski had suddenly stood before him in Lainz’s apartment. How his eyes had been riveted by her long legs, his gaze following the line of her slender body to the expressive face framed by chestnut hair. As he always did when faced with passionate-seeming women, he felt himself weak and at a disadvantage, and he despised himself for it.

It was not long before the radiator was filled again, and they continued their journey. In Nuremberg, Schilling had them stop near the clinic by the Haller Field. He went on foot to take Gisela to the lodgings at number 3 Frauenholz Street. Frauenholz Street was a short street in the part of town known as Saint Johannis, in the immediate neighbourhood of the Johannis Cemetery.

Afterwards he drove with Peters to Rothenburg Street. They parked the car in one of the side streets, and posted themselves in the entrance opposite number 56.

An hour later, they saw Karin Ruland coming. They crossed

the road, followed her into the building to the ground-floor flat on the right, and Schilling spoke to her just at the moment when she had opened her door.

'Do you remember me, Karin?'

She felt a chill run through her spine. She recognised the voice. So now it's happening, she thought, now the time has come.

She turned round. 'Yes, Ralf, I remember you,' she said. 'I've been expecting you.'

'So much the better.' He pushed her into the flat and Peters came in after them.

They exchanged a few polite platitudes. Schilling saw that they were not welcome, but had not expected it to be otherwise. They stood facing one another in the kitchen. Karin had closed the window, drawn the curtains and switched on the light. She made no move to offer them seats or to ask them to take off their coats.

'You know what we're here for?'

'Yes.'

'Then I'd like you to tell Clairon that you're ill today.'

'Today? I can't be sure I'll reach him.'

'You'll try.'

'And if I don't manage?'

'You'll manage. You love your brother too much.'

'What has Werner got to do with it?'

'Now Karin! Do you seriously think we would rely on your whim?'

'If you do anything to Werner . . . !'

'Werner's welfare is in your hands alone. Today, all right?'

'Yes,' she said hesitatingly, 'but it'll be a close thing. Even till I get to the tram. And there are hardly any after seven.'

'Like in Munich,' he said, and then to Peters, 'we'll take her in the car.'

'Whatever you say,' said Peters.

In the back of the car, Karin had time to consider her position. Should she just talk to Clairon so that things should look right, and then tell Clinton in the meantime? Was there really any point getting him involved in this? Would she not run the risk that he might misunderstand her reasons for keeping quiet till then? Should she endanger her relationship with him over this trivial business? Didn't it make more sense to let Ralf Schilling

have his way and take a few days sick leave?

She decided on a compromise. She would not provoke Ralf Schilling, and at the next favourable opportunity she would cautiously sound out Clinton.

Raoul Clairon was at home. He invited her in very pleasantly, told her how delighted he was that she had come to visit him, made her sit on the sofa, got her a drink and did not give her a chance to say anything.

'I knew you'd come one day!' His movements were boisterous and his eyes flashed behind his thick glasses.

'Mr. Clairon, I must disappoint you -'

'Most certainly not, my dear. I'm sure you -'

'I'm sorry, Mr. Clairon, I have got to tell you -'

'What's the matter then, my dear? What about giving me a kiss to say hello?' He bent over her and she realised he was drunk.

'I'm sick, Mr. Clairon.'

'Sick?' He pulled back.

'I have a fever. A high fever.'

'A fever?' He looked at her stupidly. 'And you came here - ?'

'I only came to tell you that I can't possibly work tomorrow. And the way things look, I won't be able to come for a few days.'

'The way things look - ?'

'I've got measles.'

'Measles?' Instinctively he moved away from her.

'Yes. And I came to suggest to you . . . I've got a friend. A very pretty friend. I've already spoken to her -'

'You mean that your friend - ?' He changed his informal tone.

'Oh yes. She knows the work; she's been following the trial from the beginning with more interest than me. She's perfect. Perfect in every way.'

'When can she come? Can she come tonight?' He spoke loudly as though to drown out his thoughts

She could tell at once why he was suddenly prepared to accept the exchange. His look gave him away. What's it to me, she asked herself, if he enjoys himself with this girl? He can rape her for all I care. Who knows, maybe she'll even enjoy it.

'I'll go over to her right away.'

'By tram? That'll take too long for me. I'll go and fetch her!'

'No.' The thought of what would happen if Clairon and Ralf

Schilling met one another burned through her mind. 'No, it's better if I go on my own. I'll hurry. It's no good if a girl gets an idea of how badly you want her.' She avoided putting a double meaning in the words, but Clairon understood her perfectly.

She drove with Schilling and Peters to Frauenholz Street, and Schilling explained to her where Gisela Silinski lived. She was to go to her on her own.

She rang the doorbell, and was surprised to see that Gisela did not look at all the type of girl to work with a man like Ralf Schilling. Her face was too honest, her manner direct and open.

Karin explained the situation, but kept quiet about the reason why Clairon was sending for her that evening, and Gisela picked up her coat.

One hour later the 2-litre Adler stopped again in one of the side roads near Clairon's apartment. Schilling explained that from now on Gisela Silinski took full responsibility, and he and Peters would disappear as agreed. With Karin there, he did not mention that they were driving back to Munich.

Clairon had left the door on the latch. He received his two lady visitors in the bath. Irritated, Karin introduced Gisela Silinski. Noticing how attracted he was to her, she said good-bye, and left the two of them together. The door closed. 'So you are the much-praised temporary.'

'Yes,' said Gisela, 'I hope I will come up to your expectations.'

'So far, so good. I like to have good-looking people round me. I have a request—'

'Yes?'

'Go into the kitchen. In front of the window there are two bottles of Champagne. Moët et Chandon. They should be cold enough. Will you bring one of them with two glasses?'

'Certainly.' She paused in the doorway. 'Do you want it here in the bath?'

'Why not? It's very stimulating.'

She brought the Champagne, uncorked it and poured it into the glasses until it foamed over the brim.

'To good work together! Sit down over here, and tell me about yourself.'

Gisela sat on the edge of the tub and told him the life-story she had prepared. He urged her to drink. She saw clearly what

he had in mind, but with gentle emphasis, she pushed back the hand on her thigh. 'You're making me wet.'

'So what? The easiest thing would be for you to take off your clothes and get in. That would solve the problem.'

'For you.'

'And perhaps for you too. Well - ?'

She wondered how she could extricate herself from the affair. 'And what if I don't?'

'If you don't?' He looked at her thoughtfully. 'The question's hardly worthy of you.'

'Not worthy of me? How do you mean - ?'

'Because you're much too intelligent not to be able to answer the question yourself.'

'Do a secretary's duties involve more than work?'

'Just call it pleasure.'

'I'm here to introduce myself to you.'

'And I'm here to admire you in all your beauty. And when I admire something beautiful, I also want to possess it. There's a towel hanging there behind you. I mean, only if you are more prudish than I assume.'

'Never mind the towel.' She was getting herself more inescapably entangled with everything she said. Although she had made up her mind to put up with any degradation for the sake of freeing her father, she could not overcome her scruples now.

'If you're not prudish, then what are you worried about?'

She would have given a lot to have the right reply to that. But she did not. 'You're going too fast for me,' she said, and knew in the same instant that she was not going to convince Clairon with that worn-out protestation.

'I don't believe you.' He filled up her glass. 'And you know very well that I can't believe you. What have you got to lose? Your innocence? If that's the case, then I'll make you a present of it. Cheers!'

She said nothing. She drank. She had not expected her 'mission' to be any different. She was prepared to have to gain the confidence of a particular U.S. lieutenant, to tap him for information, find out the arrangements inside the court building and the prison area, and smuggle arms into the law-courts.

She knew that the menial jobs in the court building were done by prisoners-of-war from the Waffen-S.S. She had been told that every day U.S. trucks brought them from the camp in

Hersbruck, and that some of the prisoners still wore their loose camouflage suits. And she had been informed of how, where and when she could make contact with them with the least risk in order to tell them what they should conceal in their camouflage jackets on day X to assist the entry of 'Battle-Group Edelweiss' from within.

She had the plan precisely in her head. There was no question that where the situation demanded, it required her to give herself up completely as a woman. She had reconciled herself to that.

And yet now she hesitated. From the corner of her eye she looked at Clairon. He was staring at her hungrily. She wondered whether she might succeed in getting him so drunk that he would have to give up, but dismissed the thought. Suddenly she felt how much the Champagne had gone to her own head. If she put them to a trial of strength, Clairon would most definitely emerge as the better drinker.

'What's the matter? Cat got your tongue?' He splashed a drenching spray of water into her lap with the back of his hand. 'Now you're wet enough, aren't you?'

She turned towards him. 'Where was the towel, did you say?'

'I knew it!' His eyes glittered. He tried to grab hold of her.

There was a ring at the door.

He stopped still.

It rang again. And then, after a pause, a third time, without stopping. What's that?' She looked at him.

'The front door.'

'Who could it be?'

'No idea. Doesn't matter, either.' He had no idea who could want to talk to him at that hour. He was certainly not expecting a visit.

It rang again, echoing shrilly through the spacious apartment.

'He's stubborn, whoever he is. I suppose we'll have to open the door.' She kept her eyes fixed on him.

'Okay, give me the towel.'

He wrapped himself in it, got out of the bath and went into the hall. The ringing continued.

'Who is it?' he asked through the door.

'Is that Mr. Clairon?' came a feminine voice.

'Yes. What do you want?'

'This is Henrike Berger. I simply have to speak to you.'

On the 16th of March 1946, a Saturday, Dr. Vesenstedt had gone to see Henrike 'Berger' in Burgfarnbach. He had come from Coburg, where he had enquired about the condition of Claudius. As before, his life hung in the balance.

When she asked him about her husband, Vesenstedt was evasive. 'Your husband is fine, considering the circumstances.'

'Hasn't he given me any sign?'

'No,' Vesenstedt had said, 'he still hasn't.'

She was worried. In her opinion it was completely out of character for Friedrich to leave her in a state of uncertainty. She thought about it all that night. She could think of no explanation. Towards morning, she fell asleep exhausted.

An hour later she woke up in terror. She was bathed in sweat. She had seen Frederick hanging on the gallows.

Her mind was made up. She washed, ate breakfast, and went to the railway station. The noon train was cancelled for that day, and it was nearly three o'clock when she arrived in Fürth. She reached Nuremberg at four. She did not rest until she had the address. Meanwhile it had grown dark. She went to Harsdörffer Street on foot. Number 1 had a grey, sooty façade. The stairway to the first floor was of stone. The flat door had a heavy wooden panel. In the middle of the panel a brass handle gleamed dully.

Henrike 'Berger' pressed the bell.

'You? What do you want here?' Raoul Clairon had opened the door. He held a bath-towel together over his naked body.

'I'm sorry to disturb you, Mr. Clairon, but I must speak to you.'

He was annoyed with himself for answering the door. The bath-water was dripping off him.

'Could I possibly come inside . . . ' She made a weak gesture towards the staircase.

He snapped back into full alertness. 'Come in.'

She stepped into the half-lit hallway, and he closed the door. 'If you wait here until I . . . ' He pointed to the open door of the living-room.

'Thank you. And please excuse me once again . . . '

He went back into the flat. Gisela was standing by the bath, still holding her glass. She gave him an enquiring look. 'Nobody important, I'm sure,' he said, 'No idea what she wants. I'll have to get dressed.'

'Should I go? It'll soon be curfew.'

'Go? Rubbish! You're to stay, of course. The best thing is for you to get into bed in the meantime. Here.' He pressed the bottle of Champagne into her hand. 'When it's empty, go and get the other one.'

She said nothing, and went with her glass and the bottle under her arm into the neighbouring bedroom. It was dark. One window had the now usual covering of cardboard. The other was undamaged and open, and through it the brightness of the moonlit night shone into the room.

Gisela did not bother with the electric light. She felt her way round the bed and put the bottle on the night-table. Thoughtfully she undressed and crept under the bedclothes with a swift movement, resigning herself to the fact that she would not be able to escape Clairon.

For a while she lay still, gazing out into the night, and then she poured herself some Champagne and gulped it down. Indistinct voices could be heard coming from the living-room.

Clairon was half-sitting on the arm-rest of one of the thickly-upholstered, worn armchairs. He sized up Henrike 'Berger' with a look. 'So you don't think your husband has received the capsule?'

'I know it.'

'Okay. And why have you come here? To tell me that?'

'That too.'

'And why else?'

'I've also come to set you a time-limit.'

'Oh? You are setting me a time-limit? *You* set a time-limit for *me*?'

'It's now almost three months since we made our deal together. I'll give you until tomorrow evening. If my husband does not have the capsule in his possession by then, I will . . .'

'You will what?'

'I will bring a charge against you.'

'Bring a charge . . . ?' He shook with laughter. 'You'll bring a charge against me! What a splendid idea!' He laughed so loudly it pealed through the flat and could be heard by Gisela in the bedroom. She had just put the glass to her lips again and stopped in the middle of her movement. A shudder went down her spine. She poured the Champagne down her throat as though to wash away the howls of laughter.

Clairon slapped his thigh. 'She'll bring a charge against me! Me! And how, if I may ask, and where? *Do* tell me?'

'Through the military authorities.' Henrike 'Berger' stood two paces away from him, and was looking down at him completely calmly.

'And what charge, may I ask?'

'Theft.'

'This is getting better and better! And what have I stolen?'

'My necklace of rubies.'

'My dear woman.' His voice was thick with irony. He slid from the armchair and stood so close to her that she could feel his breath. 'You seem to be getting out of your depth! Don't you know what I would reply to your complaint? Eh?' - He raised her chin with his forefinger. 'You listen to me. I never received a capsule nor any kind of necklace from you. If you really want to know, we've never even spoken to one another. I've never met you before today, half an hour ago. You came to me because someone told you that you're my type. That I find it enormous fun to go to bed with well-built Nazi mummies. That I love blonde teutonic ladies more than anything. You realised that that was your only chance. Now let's see if you really do have a chance.' He tore her blouse open. She pretended not to notice. 'Well now . . . ' he said, 'you seem to have a very good chance indeed!'

He gave her a slight push and went over to the buffet. 'Cognac? Whisky?'

She looked past him and tidied herself up as far as she could.

'I asked you a question.'

'I don't drink.'

'All the better. I've no time anyway. And I really want to take plenty of time over you. Shall we set a time-limit? Yes, I'll set a time-limit. Shall we say, tomorrow? If you don't turn up here tomorrow evening then . . . '

'What then?' She shuddered.

'There, you see? Now you see what I mean about the time-limit. If you don't come, then I'll give you a fitting mention in my evening prayer on the radio.' He opened the door for her. 'And of course I'll also make sure your husband knows all about your generosity.'

She tried to push past him, but he held her back by the arm.

'But if you do come, I give you my word of honour that your husband will have the capsule the day after tomorrow. Quite apart from that I can promise you a truly entertaining night.'

With a bonus of two bottles of genuine French Champagne. Well . . . ?'

She waited for him to let her go, and then walked through the hall to the front door. She had already opened the door, when it flashed through his mind that it might have been better to keep her there and have her meet the girl Gisela Silinski in the bedroom.

But before he had time to finish the thought, the door had closed.

Henrike 'Berger' leaned against the banisters. She felt as though her head would explode. She swore to herself she would make Clairon pay for it.

For one moment, Clairon stood indecisively in the sombre hall. Then he went back into the living-room, took the bottle of whisky on the buffet, poured himself a brimming glass, drained it, quickly stripped off his clothing and went into the bedroom.

Gisela Silinski was still looking out into the moonlit night. Her arm was hanging loosely from the side of the bed. She was drunk.

One day later, in Lower Franconia, two American corporals were driving along the Main in a jeep between Rothenfels and Markheidenfeld. The corporals belonged to the special branch of the military authority of the county. Suddenly they stopped. They had discovered the entrance to one of the many caves along the river. They jumped down from the jeep and looked at the heavy iron door which led into the cave. It was sealed up. Breaking it open, they found a long, dark subterranean passage at the end of which they made a remarkable discovery. They drove to their headquarters and came back after a short time with four trucks. There were 160 hundredweight of German military documents stored in the cave. Including an index of all the names of the 38th Armoured Assault Division. The documents had been hidden there during the retreat through the Main Valley. The index was examined. The card of the former *S.S.-Hauptsturmführer* Ulrich Lainz was also there. The men of the special branch took no further notice of it.

Gisela Silinski worked fast and well. She got to know Bob Hammersmith on the day following the already almost forgotten night with Clairon.

In doing so she was ruled by only one thought: the quicker and more thoroughly I perform my mission, the earlier my father will escape from his murderers.

She had taken every possibility into account in preparing for a meeting with the young U.S. lieutenant. She was prepared for him to reject her, to be shy or to require a certain period of warming up. She had expected to be repelled by him, and to have to overcome her feelings. She was ready to find a person she could not respond to in the slightest; but she had not considered for an instant that she could perhaps fall in love with him.

She noticed him during the 11.30 interval in the proceedings. In the wide lobby outside the entrance to the court-room groups of journalists, observers, secretaries, assistants of the defence or the prosecution were standing together, stretching their legs, arguing and smoking for a quarter of an hour as they did during every morning recess.

She had slipped away from Clairon and had set off in search of Bob Hammersmith. She was in luck. He was in charge of the guards in the middle corridor.

Everything happened very quickly. Unnoticed by him, she went up close to where he stood, fell to the floor with a little cry, took a moment to observe his reaction, and then closed her eyes as though she had fainted.

She heard the voices above her, the instructions to bring her into the next room, and felt herself lifted up and carried away.

The buzz of voices faded away. The room smelled of paper and documents and coffee. Very slowly, she opened her eyes. One of the sentries was bending over her. 'Okay?' he asked. She nodded. He helped her up and she went back to the lobby. In the meantime Bob Hammersmith had gone as far as the stairs on his round of inspection, and she did not bother about him further. She waved to Clairon and went into the court-room with him. The court was seated again. She had achieved what she had set out to do.

After the close of the afternoon session, she managed to lose Clairon in the crowd and moved away in the opposite direction, walking through passages on the various floors in the hope of coming across the lieutenant. The building was largely empty. There was not much time left if her search should not be successful. But once again that day, fortune smiled on her.

She had just decided to leave the building and postpone the

attempt to make contact until tomorrow, when without thinking she looked out of one of the big windows down into the courtyard. Bob Hammersmith was walking across the parking area at that very moment.

She ran ahead to the stairs and rushed down, taking them two or three at a time, and reached the bottom quite out of breath.

He was about to get into his jeep. She slowed her pace and arrived in front of the jeep's radiator at precisely the moment when Bob put his foot down on the accelerator. She leaped aside with apparent horror. He braked. 'Sorry!'

'That's all right,' she said, 'you seem to bring me bad luck, that's all.'

'Me? Why?' He felt the colour shoot into his face.

'You know, today during the morning break.'

'I don't remember . . .'

'Aren't you the smart lieutenant that had me carried into that musty old document room?'

'Oh yes! That was you!' He smiled nervously.

'Yes, that was me.' She smiled back knowingly.

'Sorry!' He could not think of anything else to say. All of a sudden he felt the same pounding in his ears that he had had weeks before when he had met Karin Ruland. He had no desire to be given the brush-off a second time, and clenched his teeth together at the thought. This time he was not going to get involved.

'I'm all right except for my foot.' She made a weak gesture towards her left ankle.

'Your foot?' He was annoyed with himself for answering, and not simply moving off.

'I sprained it this morning, and I've done it again just now. I hope I'll be able to get home.'

She had him. He really had no choice but to ask if he could take her home. Not even the ban on fraternisation could apply to the transportation of an employee at the law-courts who could not walk.

He opened the door for her. Without meaning to, he glanced at her legs. They seemed to him as perfect as those of Marlene Dietrich.

Gisela sat down beside him, and looked at him unself-consciously. She found his serious boyish expression extremely funny, told him so, and he had to laugh. Before they had

reached Frauenholz Street she had got him to the point of asking her for a date.

'It doesn't have to be this evening,' he added awkwardly.

'Why not?' she said. 'Who knows if we'll still feel like it tomorrow.'

In order to avoid any unpleasantness, what with the ban on fraternisation, he visited her at about eight o'clock in her room. As the flat belonged to one of Lainz's henchmen, they were quite safe.

Bob was amazed at himself. His native shyness with girls seemed never to have existed. His normally clumsy efforts at making conversation had given way to a sparkling, lively flow of words. All of a sudden it was no problem. He could not explain the transformation. It had come about too suddenly and too unexpectedly.

The thought that Gisela was skilfully managing the whole thing did not occur to him. To him, she seemed the being he had unconsciously been longing for since he was sixteen years old.

'Gisela?'

'Yes?'

'I must tell you something.'

'Then tell it.'

'I'd like to stroke your hair.'

'Then do it.'

The days went by, and they spent every evening together. They always met immediately after the afternoon session between the law-courts and the Plärrer, and spent their hours in Gisela's room. In this way they avoided gossip, which suited them both. Him because of Clinton and Colonel Andersen, her above all because of Clairon.

So far she had been able to avoid talking to Clairon about the night she had spent with him by arriving in the press room just before the court was in session, and arranging things in such a way that she was never alone with him in the intervals; although she stayed well away from him, she performed her work to his satisfaction. She was friendly and cheerful, and he neither noticed that they never had any personal conversations, nor missed them.

Since he liked changes, it even suited him that she asked nothing from him after that evening. Henrike 'Berger' did not call again, but Clairon did not care. Some time she would see him again, he told himself, and then he would help himself to

what he thought he had missed. In the meantime he had found two German twins, young and blond, and he felt he had enough on his hands for the moment.

Clinton found that being with Karin Ruland left him scarcely any opportunity to have words with Bob. So he did not notice that Bob had no time and did not once suggest another of their evenings in the mess.

Bob and Gisela had begun more or less living together after the first few days. He had supplied himself with a second razor, hung his civilian suit in her wardrobe, and brought boxes of food and drink to the house so that they were independent of the world outside.

'This is our hideout,' he said on the fourth evening, and handed her a bottle of perfume from Paris. 'You can get anything in the PX.'

Strangely enough, she began to compare him more and more with her dead husband. Jürgen had been less than her age too. Of course, Bob was considerably younger than her. He could have been her younger brother, but perhaps that was what fascinated her so much about him. Jürgen had also wooed her in a shy, hesitant way at the beginning of their relationship. Jürgen had had the same gift for making little points of attentiveness seem completely natural to her. He too had been a devoted and extremely tender lover.

She noticed how day by day she was thinking less of Ulrich Lainz and Ralf Schilling. Her mission and 'Battle-Group Edelweiss' seemed to belong to an earlier life. Only the thought of her father reminded her that Bob had to be her opponent, her enemy.

Yet she was too weak to fight against her love. For there was no doubt in her mind that she had indeed fallen in love with this boy. She did not want it to be true, but that was how things were all the same. His awkward kind of courtship was refreshing.

But the most decisive thing for her was his honesty. When he told her about his life with such unreserve, even the details which he was ashamed of, when he always shared his thoughts with her with complete openness and let her know his feelings towards her, she felt drawn to him as to no other person in the world.

In her unconscious she felt that it was precisely because he was the opposite of her that he appeared so unique to her. It

made such a contrast to the lies with which she had had to purchase their coming together.

When he talked to her of his home, his younger brother, his neighbourhood, or the advance across the Hunsrück, and then became eager to hear about her own life, she was forced to make up stories. Yet the more she held back from him so as not to have to lie continually, the stronger became his urge to reveal himself down to the furthest corner of his soul.

She enjoyed this love, and drank it in as though she would have to live on the memory of it one day. She pushed aside thoughts of her mission. She wanted to enjoy every moment with Bob. She knew she had no time to waste. As soon as Lainz or Schilling came to see her, she would have to act. Then she would have to prepare to say goodbye to Bob. She realised already that this parting would demand superhuman strength from her.

She would have given anything to have met this man in another time and another world.

He guessed nothing of any of these thoughts. He was there with Gisela, and that was enough for him.

Clinton was very quick to notice the change in Karin.

'Why have you been so quiet these last few days?' He sat by her bed.

'Can't a person be quiet when they're ill?'

'You don't look very ill.' He laughed.

'But I am!'

'Okay, I won't say another word.' He raised his hands. 'But you've changed. Towards me.'

'Have I?'

'Yes. Look, even this question . . .'

'You're imagining things.'

'Oh no, I can tell there's something the matter with you. Something else apart from your illness.'

'All right, so you can tell.'

She made an effort to hide her disturbed mood, but could not manage it. The conversation with Ralf Schilling and her pretended sickness were bothering her more than she would admit to herself.

'Have you got problems?'

'What makes you ask that?'

'It's possible. With Clairon, for example.'

'With Clairon?' Her heart seemed to stop beating.

'Yes, with Clairon,' he said innocently, 'or is he the perfect boss?'

'No, he's not that.' She avoided his eyes. 'I'd like to get some sleep now. I'm tired.'

'I'm on my way. I'll tell Clairon to treat you better.'

'No, don't do that!'

'I was joking. Maybe it's because he misses you so much that he's being a bit nasty. Who's taking your place?'

'Someone I know. Please, Clin, let me get some sleep now. I want to be able to get up tomorrow.'

'Okay. I'll let you sleep. But I'll come by again later to see how you are, right?'

'Yes.' She leaned forward and they kissed one another.

When he had closed the flat door behind him, she leaped out of bed and took pen and paper out of her bag.

She wanted to rid herself of the Ralf Schilling problem. She wanted to unburden herself, and talk it out. Clinton could not possibly be the person for that. He would have interrogated her and worked on her until she had confessed the whole story; the strange conversation with Werner, Schilling's visit, her feigned illness, the business with the girl Gisela Silinski. No, she would not let Clinton in on any of this.

So she wrote a letter to her brother.

She expected that the letter would probably go through the censor, and she used expressions which would mean nothing to a third party. She wrote about the doubts she had had after 'taking care of things', and the fears she felt that Werner 'might have made a mistake'.

It was a letter full of complicated phrases. Werner, however, saw it for what it was intended to be: a cry for help from a sister to her brother.

He read the letter several times over. Then his mind was made up. He went to the farmer's wife. 'I must have three days off.'

'Three days off? You're crazy!' She was standing at the wash-basin, and scarcely looked up from her work.

'I must!'

'There's plenty of things I must do, and can't do.'

'Listen, this is important. My sister is in danger.'

'She shouldn't have gone to Nuremberg.'

'Well, I'm going.'

'Then you'd better pack your things and take them with you when you do.' She wiped the sweat from her forehead with her arm.

He thought for a moment, knowing that she meant what she said. Could he just take his chances and find himself suddenly out on the street?

'All right,' he said, 'then an afternoon at least.'

He had made up his mind. If he could not have three days off to go and see Karin in Nuremberg, then he would at least go to Landshut to find Ralf Schilling. If he succeeded, he would tell him in no uncertain terms that Karin and he wanted nothing more to do with his organisation, that he should leave them alone once and for all.

Four times he cycled the eight miles in vain. On the fifth afternoon he found Ralf Schilling crossing the footbridge over the Maxwehr in the direction of the power-station. Werner leaned his bicycle against the nearest tree, locked it up and followed him. The rushing of the water covered the sound of his feet on the wooden boards.

Schilling was going towards the New Town. He had turned up the collar of his soldier's great-coat, had his hands in his pockets, and was in a hurry.

A few minutes earlier Peters had passed on to him a message from Lainz: their positions in Landshut were to be abandoned. They were to transfer as quickly as possible to Nuremberg.

Schilling was now in the process of fetching his belongings from the Moosmüller Boarding House.

As he was about to enter the main hall of the boarding house, Werner stepped in front of him.

'What are you doing here?' Schilling narrowed his eyes.

'I must talk to you.'

'Sorry. Got no time.' He went into the half-lit hall towards the stairs.

Werner was furious. 'If I can't talk to you straight away, then I'll turn the lot of you in!' He shouted so loudly the walls rang.

Schilling stopped dead. 'Don't do that!' he hissed under his breath, and went back to him. 'It's all right.' He slapped him on the shoulder. 'But you must understand, I've got an important appointment.' He spoke quietly and looked round to see if anyone was coming.

'I've been looking for you for four days, and that's long enough.'

'So what's the matter?'

'I want to talk to you about Karin.'

'Not here! Come with me.' Schilling pulled him out on to the street.

'We'll go to the Isar. We won't be disturbed there.'

They walked along the New Town, past the Ursuline Church as far as the power-station. Schilling stopped. 'Down the slope here, behind the bushes. We'll be on our own there.'

Werner hesitated. 'I don't need to hide myself.'

'But I do. Come on.' He took hold of Werner's arm and pushed him down the slope and into the thicket of bushes.

Unaware of any danger, Werner did not resist. He realised that the thundering of the waterfall would provide a wall of sound to shield their conversation; he understood that behind the bushes they would be safe from the eyes of people walking by; but he did not think for an instant that Ralf Schilling would simply shoot him down here without an explanation, without speaking another word to him, without giving him the opportunity to tell him what he wanted to say. To Werner Ruland, despite all their differences of opinion, Ralf Schilling was still his old school friend. All he wanted was to let him know that he could not count on him any more. It did not even remotely occur to him that he had spoken his own death sentence with the words 'I'll turn the lot of you in'.

As Schilling pulled the trigger, Werner's thoughts were with Karin. He saw her before him, and took her into his arms to keep her safe.

Then he felt a burning pain in his chest. He clutched at his heart automatically, turned to the side and looked down the barrel of the pistol.

He wanted to ask why, wanted to look Ralf in the eyes, wanted to run away, go to Nuremberg to see Karin, to ask her to forgive him for his lies, never to leave her alone again, wanted . . .

He was no longer able to form a thought. His eyes opened wide. His hands stiffened. He turned and fell over forwards.

To be on the safe side, Schilling put another two bullets into his head. But Werner Ruland was already dead.

Chapter Eight

Werner Ruland had never spoken of Karin's whereabouts in Nuremberg. Quite rightly, he suspected that the farmer might hold it against him if he discovered that she was employed in the trial. The farmer was a former S A -*Scharführer*.

The result was that Karin only came to hear about the death of her brother by a roundabout route. Richard Billsteiner had been ordered back from Landshut by Clinton Keen. He had not been able to report anything further about the supposed group of conspirators. In the subsequent conversation with Keen he mentioned the murder near the power-station in passing, and described the victim. Clinton also happened to mention it to Karin. She became attentive. Clinton had the matter investigated again. A little later she had it confirmed: the dead man was Werner.

It took a few days before it became possible to speak to her once more. She felt terribly alone. If it had not been for Clinton, she would have considered suicide.

When she was over the first pain of it, he asked her if she could think of any explanation for the murder. She said she could not, having decided to preserve Werner's memory, and not have it burdened by any posthumous investigation.

She was in doubt as to whether she had done the right thing. Yet it seemed to be the only thing she could do for Werner.

Clinton did not say anything more about it, as he saw no connection between the murder of Werner Ruland and that of Harald Erich Steinbronn. He did not know that both murders were carried out with a weapon of the same calibre. The detectives in Landshut had not been able to make a positive measurement of the bullet-hole in Steinbronn's already decayed body.

Now it was Karin's turn to ask Gisela Silinski for an extension of time. The request was just what Gisela needed, and she agreed.

Her next few days with Bob passed as if in a dream, overshadowed only by her fear of the end of their relationship,

which she could see approaching even nearer.

'Do you know what day it is today?' he asked, as he came in through the door.

She went pale. Had he discovered something about her?

'No, darling, tell me.'

He gave her a kiss on the cheek. 'One year ago today Franklin Delano Roosevelt died. He was one of our best presidents.' He brought her into the room. 'And one year ago today, Harry S. Truman was sworn into office. It was very hard for him after Roosevelt.' He pressed her gently on to the sofa. 'And one year ago today our 9th Army occupied Hannover and the Russians crossed the Danube Canal at Vienna.'

He made drinks for both of them, passed her one, raised his glass, said 'Cheers! Say, it's been a crazy year, hasn't it? A new president, over to Europe, won the war, living in a foreign city, and . . . ' he bent down towards her and kissed her on the lips, ' . . . and met the girl of my life!'

He looked at her enquiringly, but she avoided his eyes. 'My year of truth, darling! My real year of truth! And you're to blame for it, you alone. What's the matter? Don't you feel well?' He ran his hand over her hair.

'It's nothing. Nothing at all.' She could not very well tell him about the message she had found on her table when she got home. She had breathed a sigh of relief that evening that for once she had walked into the room on her own, and that Bob had gone to the PX. What might have happened otherwise, she preferred not to think about.

The message was written on the back of a page from a calendar for the year 1943. 'Today, seven o'clock, ticket at box-office - Victoria Cinema - E.'

'But you look upset . . . ' He sat down beside her and tenderly pressed her head against his shoulder.

'It's nothing.' She slipped away from his arm. 'I have to leave.'

'Leave?'

'Yes. For an hour. Or two.'

'When?'

'Right away.'

He looked at her hard. 'Where to?'

'Darling, please don't ask. Believe me, it's not important. I'll be back in an hour or so.'

'Is it another man?'

She laughed. 'No. It's not what you think.' She racked her brains to think of some way of allaying his suspicions: 'I told you that my father was missing. That he was a bank-manager in Dresden. You remember?'

'Yes.'

'I'm meeting a former colleague of his. Maybe I'll find out something about my father. Don't worry, darling, he's well over sixty.'

'Okay.' He was reassured. 'I'll drive you.'

'No. You wait here for me. I don't want us to be seen together. Do you understand?' She put her arm around his hips.

'Okay. I'll wait.' He pulled her close to him.

Ulrich Lainz was born on the 10th of December 1909 in Austrian Graz. He had one brother and one sister. His father was an official working for the municipal government.

Ulrich matriculated at secondary school and became a sports teacher. From May 1932 he was sports teacher at the grammar school in Klagenfurt. His pupils feared him. With merciless harshness, he drove them to the highest performances they were capable of. There was a fatality. Ulrich Lainz was held responsible and dismissed. He was unemployed.

He joined the N.S.D.A.P. After the party was outlawed in 1934, he worked for it underground. On the 2nd of November 1934, he shot a political opponent in a quarrel, a man from the 'Fatherland Front'.

To avoid sentence, Lainz fled to Germany and joined the so-called 'Austrian Legion'.

In 1936 he joined the S.S. From autumn 1937 he became an instructor in a military training camp near Bad Reichenhall.

On the 11th of March 1938 he marched into Vienna with Hitler's troops as an S.S.-*Unterscharführer*. After the German march into Poland, he became a member of the Waffen-S.S. in September 1939. His promotion proceeded rapidly.

In 1941 he was made an *Untersturmführer* near Karkhov, having distinguished himself in the shooting of Soviet hostages. In 1942 he became an *Obersturmführer*, in 1944 a *Hauptsturmführer*.

Lastly he was in the 38th Armoured Assault Division. During the retreat, he had prisoners shot who were no longer in a condition to endure the hardships.

Today in Nuremberg, Ulrich Lainz went into the Victoria

Cinema just after seven o'clock. There was a full feature cultural film showing on the life of Arturo Toscanini. The performance was sold out.

Gisela Silinski was already sitting in her seat, number 19 in the back row. Lainz sat down in his folding seat, number 20.

The first part of the programme was being shown, a short film entitled *Reeds in the Lake*. They leaned towards one another and dropped their voices so as to avoid being overheard by their neighbours.

'I signed my message to you "E",' said Lainz, 'did you realise what it was about straight away?' He still did not think very much of her.

'Yes,' she said, 'Edelweiss.'

He was almost disappointed that she had responded so quickly. But he suppressed his personal antipathy. 'Has everything gone smoothly so far?'

'Yes.'

'How far have you got with your partner?'

The question made her throat tighten. She could not reply.

'Did you hear what I said?'

'Yes.'

'Well?'

She said nothing.

He repeated the question. 'How far have you got with your partner?'

She knew she could not remain silent for ever. Yet try as she might not to, she could still see Bob before her.

Lainz placed his hand on her forearm and brought his mouth up close to her ear. 'Have you got far enough with your partner to be able to carry out your mission?'

She swallowed. 'Yes.'

'At last!'

'What did you say?'

'Nothing. How long do you think you'll take?'

'I don't know.'

'What's the matter with you? Are you ill?'

'No, I'm well.'

'All right, how long do you estimate . . . ?'

'Two or three weeks.'

'Much too long. Remember your father.'

Her father! The words shattered her. For some time, she had pushed all thought of her father out of her mind. She had

decided to defend her happiness with Bob, even though she had long been aware that it meant closing her eyes to reality. Now the limits of this happiness were being revealed to her.

Lainz is right to jerk me out of my illusions, she told herself. It's true, I would have abandoned my father.

'How is he?'

'His case is supposed to come up next week.'

Next week? The thought flashed through her, oh God, then all I have left are a few days, just a few short hours.

'Next week?' she heard herself whisper, 'then all I have left are a few days?'

'If we're going to visit your father while he is being transferred, that's right. Make sure you get it done in three days at the latest.'

She took her time with the answer. Then she said: 'I'll do my utmost.'

'Good. You'll be hearing from me every day from now on.'

'But please, not at my place. It could upset everything there.'

'Fair enough, I'll find a way.' He pressed a folded piece of paper into her hand. 'Here are the details.' And finally: 'You can reach me at five Wiesental Street, at Klein's. Quite close to you.' Then he stood up and pushed past the knees of the strangers to the gangway.

The first film in the programme came to an end. Gisela waited for the beginning of the Toscanini film, and then left the auditorium also. In the weak light of the foyer she unfolded the piece of paper. It was the ground-plan of the law-courts. She put it in her bag. When she got home, she would hide it under the wallpaper behind the wardrobe.

Bob was lying on the sofa when she arrived back. He had fallen asleep. She woke him with a gentle kiss. What will our last kiss be like, she wondered. Brief? Passionate? On the cheek, on the lips, or just in our thoughts?

'You're back already?'

'Yes,' she said, 'unfortunately I didn't find the man.'

'What now?'

'Nothing. Now I'll have to wait and see if he gets in touch again.'

Ulrich Lainz had left the Victoria Cinema. Purposefully, he walked through the dark streets, kicking at pieces of brick which

lay in his way now and then as he crossed over the heaps of rubble in an area of ruins.

He passed by endless rows of wrecked houses of which only the first storeys were still standing, past a ruin nailed up with boards from which loud music came blaring out, and came to a street corner on which even at this late hour a group of eight- to twelve-year-old boys were standing together. Two left the bunch and made whispered offers of cigarettes and chewing gum.

The route brought him to Allersberg Street. There, on the corner of the narrow Andreas Street, diagonally across the road from the Gustave Adolf Church, and on the ground floor of an undistinguished-looking two-storey house stood the Binz Inn. The entrance was in Andreas Street. Lainz went up the two steps into the narrow entrance-hall, from which a steep wooden staircase on the right-hand side led up to the private upper storeys.

He went straight to the door leading to the toilet, and washed his hands at the tap there.

Then he went into the tap-room, two interconnecting rooms holding eight tables in all. Ralf Schilling waved to him from the table to the right of the door by the stove.

They exchanged a brief greeting, Lainz ordered a beer, and they leaned their heads close together over the table.

‘Everything all right?’

Schilling was nervous. His fingers were fidgeting with the breadcrumbs.

‘Yes,’ said Lainz in a low voice, ‘I’ve given her three days to do it.’

‘What if there’s a delay in moving her father?’

‘That doesn’t matter if she’s already got it done. How did you get on?’

‘I’ve told Stührk. He’ll be here any moment.’

Elmar Stührk was the fourth and youngest member of the seven-man battle-group. Although aged a bare nineteen years now, he had been in the Hitler Youth a year before. In the last weeks of the war he had on several occasions distinguished himself by ‘bravery in the face of the enemy’. He was one of those boys in whom the seed sown by the N.S.D.A.P. had come to fruition.

As though on cue, he appeared in the doorway, a thin lad with hollow cheeks, his face dominated by steel-rimmed glasses. He

slipped off his soldier's great-coat, sat down, and Lainz put him through a short interrogation.

'Have you got lodgings?'

'Yes. With a friend.'

'A safe friend?'

'Dead safe.'

'Give me the address.'

'Here.' Stührk pushed a crumpled-up piece of paper across the table.

'You know you've got to stay at the ready.'

'Yes.'

'At all times!'

'I know.'

'There must always be someone at the address.'

'I know.'

'Who stays there if you have to leave for a short time?'

'My friend.'

'Is he as old as you?'

'Older. Going on twenty-one.'

'What does he do?'

'Business deals. Black market and stuff.'

'Does the place belong to him?'

'His mother.'

'Does she live with him?'

'Yes. It's a big place. A lot of other people live there too. Twelve altogether.'

Lainz shot Schilling a questioning look. Schilling said: 'I've checked it. No danger.'

Lainz turned to Stührk. 'It's still not advisable for you to attempt to make any contact.'

Stührk nodded.

'Who stays there if your friend's out too?'

'His mother.'

'How old?'

'About middle fifties.'

'Have you got all your things?'

'Yes.'

'Including . . . ?' Lainz unfolded the crumpled piece of paper, wrote the word *ammunition* on the back and pushed it across to Stührk.

'Yes,' said Stührk, 'it's all there.'

'Where do you keep your things?'

'In the cellar. In a locked trunk.'

'Bad. You must always keep your things within reach. Is there anywhere you could do that?'

'I've got a small room. Used to be a box-room. In between the pipes there's what used to be a sort of cistern with a lock. Not used any more.'

'Better than the cellar for the time being. The important thing is: out of sight and within reach.'

'I know.'

'Where do you eat?'

'Mostly in the house.'

'Where else?'

'Here.'

'Is it far to your place?'

'Ten minutes.'

'Are you registered?'

'I don't understand . . .'

'Have you registered, do you get ration-cards, do you have to fill out a questionnaire?'

'No.'

'What does he live on?' The question was aimed at Schilling.

'Our reserves,' he answered.

'Good. Any questions?' Lainz looked at Stührk.

'Yes,' said Stührk, 'can I get in touch with you as well?'

'Only via Schilling.'

'Thank you. Nothing else.' Stührk hesitated. He was unsure whether he ought to raise the question himself. Then he said: 'I've just been listening to the radio Clairon.'

'Well?'

'It looks bad for Kaltenbrunner.'

'Details?'

'He seems pretty well done for. With his nerves and everything. Question: what happens if he doesn't make it?'

Before he answered, Lainz looked round to see if anyone could be listening. But there were only five elderly women sitting at the next table, engrossed in a lively conversation.

'Nothing,' he said quietly, 'nothing is changed. As soon as the thing gets under way, we can't take any account of individuals. However much we regret it.'

Chapter Nine

Kaltenbrunner sat on the bed in his cell. He stared at the bare wall without taking it in. He could not grasp that his situation was as good as hopeless, that he had forfeited his life.

Lainz followed the newspaper reports and Raoul Clairon's radio commentary very closely so far as they concerned the four defendants who were to be freed. With each day that passed, Kaltenbrunner seemed in a worse condition. He was written off by Clairon.

Lainz took the quickest route to Frankfurt and expressed his opinion to Hemmersbach. 'Kaltenbrunner represents a risk, *Standartenführer*. He could easily collapse.' Hemmersbach would not accept the suggestion and insisted that Kaltenbrunner should be freed. 'It is not just a question of the *Obergruppenführer* himself, but of the effect on our comrades. If we do not manage to snatch the chief defendant from the S.S. out of the Allies' hands, then we can give up our idea of a revolution.'

Lainz went back to Nuremberg. Everything had been set up for the operation. It was due to begin in a short time. Now it all depended on Gisela Silinski.

Meanwhile, under pressure from Clinton, Karin Ruland had gone back to her job with Clairon. 'Keeping busy will drive out painful thoughts,' was what he had said, and she was happy that he had brought her back into the world of active life. That way she was better able to get over her brother's death.

As before, she saw Clinton in every spare moment. She had thought she would be able to avoid telling Clinton about Ralf Schilling, but now she was forced to acknowledge that it weighed on her more day by day, and that her silence was slowly becoming a wall between them. She had resolved to break down this wall. She wanted to talk to Clinton about Schilling that very week, if it could be managed.

She was not to know that the former police inspector Richard Billsteiner would be going to the C.I.C. office. Otherwise she

would certainly have tried to speak to Clinton without delay.

Billsteiner's report to Clinton concerned the man he had watched at the meeting-place with the now dead Steinbronn, and since lost track of. The man had been Ralf Schilling. Billsteiner claimed he had seen him the previous evening in Nuremberg. He had stayed on his heels for two hours and had followed him to a house in the Steinbuhl neighbourhood. The exact address was 7 Schlossacker Street. Schilling had gone into the house, come out again after ten minutes, and Billsteiner had lost him.

'Lost him?' asked Clinton.

'It was evening. Dark. Schlossacker Street runs right by the railway, and when a train passes, you can't hear yourself speak. On top of that, three American lorries came by and blocked my view. By the time I was able to cross the street, the ground seemed to have swallowed him up. I went down the Steinbuhl Tunnel. Nothing.'

Clinton provided Billsteiner with another man and ordered the house to be watched.

Naturally, not expecting to be shadowed, Ralf Schilling had made the mistake of personally bringing Peters the message of the meeting with Lainz.

Next morning, Billsteiner produced a list of the inhabitants of the house. 'There are three that we should concern ourselves with.' He was sure of himself.

'The German police judge too hastily.' Clinton meant it more as a joke, but his voice sounded serious and Billsteiner felt he was being reprimanded. 'The fact is, we should concern ourselves with all of them,' said Clinton, 'since any of them could be a middleman or a cover-address – any of them. Including old women and children over the age of four or five. Which are the three you mean?'

'Their names are Hubel, Ebelein and Schmitt.'

'Schmitt' was in fact the name Peters was using to conceal his identity.

'Have all three of them been given questionnaires and filled them in?'

'I don't know.'

'That questionnaire has already helped us a lot even though it's only been out less than six weeks. Anyone who doesn't get a questionnaire is not registered – what do you people say, not earmarked, right?'

Billsteiner nodded.

'But even if someone has received a questionnaire,' Clinton went on, 'that still tells us far from everything. Receipt of the questionnaire is just a sort of pre-selection.'

'I see that,' said Billsteiner, 'but what if Hubel, Ebelein and Schmitt have all received one, but filled it out falsely?'

'They would at least have thought about it very carefully first. In Nuremberg, in the last week alone, there were more than forty prosecutions for false statements in questionnaires, with sentences as high as two years in prison. No, Billsteiner, a person would think very hard before doing that. We'll check out the questionnaire of all the people living in the house first. Until we have come up with our conclusions, don't let any one of the three men set foot outside the house without someone to watch him.'

Peters only left the house once. He went down Furth Street in order to familiarise himself with the area round the law-courts. One of Billsteiner's men followed him, but was not able to report anything suspicious.

Like the rest of the members of 'Battle-Group Edelweiss', Peters was living in the house of a reliable but unsuspecting former party comrade. To him it was simply a matter of sheltering a man who had to go into hiding for a while.

Peters was cautious. He did not leave the house again until he went to the pre-arranged meeting of the battle-group.

Gisela Silinski was supposed to be told about the meeting by Lainz himself. The owner of the house where she was staying had handed her a letter.

She sat at the round table in the middle of her room, holding the letter in her hand. She gazed out of the window into the back-yard. It was 4.30 in the afternoon. In one hour's time, Bob would be coming.

She cursed the day for confronting her with two problems which left her in a quandary. One of them was a closely-printed sheet of paper about eight inches wide and, counting the other side, which was also printed, five and a half feet long. It was the questionnaire of the 'Military Government of Germany'.

She had thought she was living there unofficially. She had neither registered, nor had she received ration-cards, nor did she want to take up employment. Nevertheless she had been given the questionnaire and was forced to sign for it with the

man at the door. As it turned out later, the 'caretaker' had mistakenly put her on the list of people registered at the house.

She had to fill out the questionnaire, that was obvious – and in the name of 'Gisela Silinski'. She racked her brains to come up with a life-story that would stand up to being checked, knowing that even the slightest mistake would arouse suspicions and that a false statement could get her prosecuted.

The questionnaire seemed to her like an X-ray machine. It contained a list of 131 questions, at the top of which was the following warning: 'Before answering read the whole questionnaire through carefully. Where there is insufficient space, extra sheets of paper may be attached. Omissions and false or incomplete information are offences against the regulations of the Military Government and will be punished accordingly.'

She read the paper through. After the usual questions concerning birth, height, hair colour, residence, service and conduct book, religion, scars, birth-marks and disfigurements, it asked for a list in exact sequence of all occupations or military service after the first of January 1931. Reasons had to be given for promotion or demotion.

Numbers 41 to 95 covered membership of the N.S.D.A.P. or any one of its associated organisations, such as the S.A., Hitler Youth, National Socialist Womanhood, National Socialist League of German Technology, S.S., National Socialist Drivers' Corps, National Socialist Pilots' Corps, National Socialist Student League, Reich Board of Music, Reich Press Board, Reich Film Board, German Hunters' Association, National Socialist League of Old Men, Reich League of German Families, U.S.A. Friendship, Advertising Council of German Commerce – and another thirty-nine besides.

Number 101 asked about relatives to whom the questions 41 to 95 applied.

The titles and publishers of everything written or co-written, compiled or edited by the subject of the questionnaire since 1923, and all public addresses or lectures, with the subject-matter, date, size of printing or audience, also had to be entered.

The yearly income from January 1931 was asked for, all personal earnings and earnings of members of the family had to be given, as did all journeys and periods of residence outside Germany, including military campaigns.

People visited or met while travelling had to be given by

name. Who had paid for the journey, whether any organisation had supported it and if so which one, had to be stated under questions 126 and 127.

Number 131, the last question, concerned knowledge of foreign languages and degree of proficiency in them.

After Gisela had read the questionnaire through, she came to the conclusion that she really had no choice, and would have to fill it out. In order to make any investigation virtually impossible, under 'education' she would simply put 'elementary school in Dresden'. Since the city was totally destroyed, nobody would be able to check anything there. Apart from that, Dresden was given as her place of birth in her forged passport, and even Bob only knew of her life story as being connected with that city on the Elbe.

On this basis, she had filled in her 131 answers. Not one single question had she answered truthfully. She had to trust to luck.

On that late afternoon she was not to know that the questionnaire involved a terrible risk. As she sat at the table and gazed out into the yard behind the house, she pushed all thought of the questionnaire out of her mind for good.

Now she was holding the note in her hand. On it was written the single word: 'Tomorrow'.

This laconic message was a second and far greater problem. It said nothing less than that she would have to act today.

So yesterday was the last day I could have spent happily with Bob, she thought with a start, and I was not even particularly tender to him. After today she would no longer be able to look him openly in the eyes. How would he react when he learned the truth about her? she wondered; the idea that he must learn of it sometime shot through her like a flame.

Suddenly she had the feeling that she could see into the future. She saw Bob confronted with the cruel facts about her; she saw him turn away, thinking that their relationship was built solely on lies, that every word, every kiss, every caress had only been to further her mission.

If only I could make him understand that my love was sincere, she thought, if only I could hammer it into him that my feelings for him had nothing, nothing at all, to do with my mission.

She toyed with the idea of leaving a letter behind which would explain all these things. She knew that was not possible.

The letter might be found beforehand and give her away.

There was no alternative but to carry out her mission as planned.

She struck a match and held it under the piece of paper with the message from Lainz. She crumbled the ashes up between her fingers.

Once Karin Ruland had gone back to her job with Clairon, Gisela had been without a pass for the law-courts. At her request, Bob had obtained another one for her.

'Why on earth would you want to stay any longer than you have to in that old hole?'

'Because the trial interests me. The atmosphere. I told you, I want to write a book about it one day.'

'Okay. I'll get you an employee card.'

She wondered whether he might have had some special intuition that day, but calmed herself with the thought that nothing in his behaviour had given any sign of it so far. She would not have to expect that possibility until tomorrow. Tomorrow, when she would have stolen the keys from him.

Immediately after her meeting with Lainz in the cinema, she had arranged things so that, as though by chance, the bunch of keys had slipped out of Bob's trouser pocket while he was lying down. She had brought the conversation round to the subject of the functions of the various keys, and he had explained them to her readily. This was the foundation of the battle-group's plan.

Now she was surprised to find herself thinking that it might be better to go to him and make a complete confession. With a request to protect her from Lainz and the others, and even, if necessary, make it possible for her to go into hiding somewhere until they could both go to the States together.

She dreamed for a few moments about how it would be living in one of the neat little wooden houses outside Texarkana. She saw herself walking along an endless road with Bob at her side. It was the road of hope, she told herself. But was it really Bob who was walking beside her? The closer she brought the picture towards her, the more unmistakably Bob changed into her father. Her decision was made.

She stepped over to the window and looked up, past the walls of the houses surrounding the yard at the back, straight to the sky. The wind was driving the clouds by. At last she

was ready to take the keys to the cellars and the master-key from Bob.

He appeared at about six o'clock. She had done her hair and freshened herself up. As usual she gave him a kiss on the cheek, one on the nose, and a lavish one on the mouth. Bob made two Manhattans. They sat down on the sofa and put their arms round one another. She made dinner for them. He poured out the beer. They smoked. They kept an intimate silence. He told her his news of the day.

The food in the canteen had been over-salted today. A journalist from Oslo had to be refused admittance. He had forgotten his I.M.T. identity card. The Waffen-S.S. prisoners who were given the menial work to do had become rebellious.

'How could that happen?' The moment she had asked the question, she wanted to take it back again. She had never talked to Bob about politics. Why should she risk a quarrel now that they were near the end of their relationship?

'How could that happen?' He clenched his fists. 'One of those bloodhounds claimed he was thirsty. The devils get a glass of water with their breakfast and their lunch. Okay. They're not entitled to more than that. Apart from those times, they get nothing. The guard told him so. Another one started getting fresh. Another one said something. Suddenly three or four of the guys went for the guard.' He was enraged. 'They wanted to beat him up!'

'And did they?' She could not restrain herself, and her voice was suddenly louder than usual.

Bob did not notice. 'The guard let him drink a glass of water. Not one of those criminals would have gotten a single drop from me!'

'Why not?'

'All S S. people are criminals, beasts, savages! The only thing they can expect from me is a fist in their guts.' He held out his clenched fist towards her to show that he meant it.

'Bob, you've got a brother, haven't you?'

'What's that got to do with it?'

'And you love him.'

'Yes. Why?'

'Let's assume for a minute that you suddenly discover that he has committed a crime. Let's say, a murder.'

'A murder?'

'Yes. And he is guilty. He gets arrested. He has to expect the death-penalty. He asks you to help him, to free him. You have the means to do it. Do you help him, or not?'

'I don't understand what you're getting at.'

'Answer the question anyway.'

'Not so easy. A murder, you say?'

'Yes, a murder. Your brother, whom you love more than anything.'

'Okay, I'm not going to try and fool you. Knowing what I'm like, I'd help him. But what's that got to do with those savages? I get it! No, darling, you're just wrong about that. These savages are more than just ordinary murderers. They're not human. And they don't have any right to be treated like humans. Don't you agree with me?'

She made no reply. She looked at him thoughtfully.

'Okay,' he said, 'you win. I'd help Billy even if he'd been an S.S.-man.'

He tapped a cigarette out of the packet, held it out to her, gave her a light and lit one for himself. 'But I have a question too.'

'I hope I can give you as straight an answer.'

'You haven't called me "darling" once today.'

She avoided his glance. She felt as though her heart had stopped beating. Did he know more about her than she thought? Was he playing cat and mouse with her in order to get her inescapably entangled?

He took her in his arms. With no will of her own, she yielded to him.

'You owe me an answer,' he said gently. 'You haven't called me "darling" one single time today.'

'I hadn't noticed,' she said in a choked voice. 'No, believe me, I don't know.' Suddenly she slipped out of his embrace and put her arms round his neck. 'Darling, I love you.'

For a moment there was silence in the room. Then he said: 'I love you too. More than anybody in the world before.'

'Come on!' She pulled him over to the bed. He stripped his uniform off, she switched out the light and took off her clothes. He came to her, giving himself completely to the pleasure of the moment. She submitted to his limitless strength and his selfless tenderness, while her thoughts strayed to the future.

Through many nights he had tried to fathom out what it could be about her that exercised such a powerful fascination

over him, but he had not found an answer. He had lain on the hard bed of his billet and his thoughts had given him no rest

Since yesterday, he believed he had found the explanation: it was her spontaneity, her naturalness and patience. He had confessed to himself that he never wanted to live without her.

They lay entwined in one another's arms without speaking. Exhausted, he fell asleep in her embrace. When she was sure that his breathing had become regular, she carefully withdrew from him and slipped out of bed. With swift and silent movements, she took the ring with the keys out of his uniform trousers which lay casually over the chair.

In the bathroom she detached the two keys she was interested in. Using a file, she bent the catch on the ring open. It would look to Bob as though the keys had slipped off the ring. Then she went back and returned the ring to his trousers with the other keys on it just as silently as she had taken them out.

Towards eleven o'clock he had to drive back to his billet. She woke him with a kiss and watched as he got dressed, running his hands over his pockets to make sure he had everything. He waved to her at the door one more time, and vanished into the night.

She locked the door behind him. For an instant she leaned back against the door, not moving. Finished! It's finished! She was incapable of any other thought. She threw herself on the bed and buried her face in the pillow.

Next morning at eight o'clock she went to see Lainz in Wiesental Street. She handed him the keys. 'I must have them back by five at the latest.'

'Impossible. It'll take a day.'

'That's no good. If I can't give them back to him this evening, if I can't tell him they must have accidentally fallen out of his pocket, I can't guarantee anything.'

'Then tell him that tomorrow. Tell him tomorrow that you have only just found them.'

'That won't do. In a room that small you'd find two keys straight away. I need them this evening by five o'clock at the latest.'

He thought for a moment, and then said: 'You'll have them.'

'How?'

'Be here at five on the dot.'

She was on time, and he handed her the keys. 'It was all

right,' he said. His tone showed his appreciation for the smooth way everything was going and her part in it, but she felt no satisfaction, nor any sense of guilt towards Bob either. There was a great void inside her.

'I need your report in three days.' His expression told her everything. She nodded.

Bob came at the same time as usual. He was in more exuberant spirits than she had ever known him before.

'Didn't you miss anything?' She nestled up against him.

'Miss anything? No. Only you.'

'Not even these?' She gave him the keys. 'They were lying by the chair this morning.'

'No. Not at all. Thanks. Lucky I didn't need them today.' He took the key-ring out of his trouser pocket and snapped them in. 'Must have fallen out. The catch is damned loose.'

'Give it to me. I'll make it tighter.'

'How?'

'With a file.' She took the ring from his hand and disappeared with it into the bathroom. 'Here you are. It's fixed again.'

The evening was like their others and Bob did not notice how preoccupied she was. He was happy to be in his 'hideout'.

Next day, she carried out the most important part of her mission in the law-courts. In this, too, her acquaintance with Bob played an important role. In the last weeks she had frequently engaged him in conversation during the breaks in the proceedings in the corridors. He liked it when, as though by chance, she talked to him openly in public and positively basked in her presence. And she was anxious to be seen with him as often as possible by the men of the guard detail.

Today she sat in the press balcony during the proceedings as an observer. In the three recesses, in the morning, midday and afternoon, she used every minute to explore the terrain she was not yet familiar with in and around the court building. During the midday recess she even managed to make contact with one of the S.S. prisoners.

He was tipping buckets of rubbish into large bins in the cellar entrance to the kitchens. A guard stood looking bored in the open kitchen door. She told him she had got lost. It happened to be one of those who had seen her quite frequently with Bob. That convinced her to put her plan into action.

The guard showed her the way. She pretended she suddenly felt ill. The guard took care of her. At her request he even went

into the kitchen to get her a glass of water. In the same instant she slipped the S.S.-man the screwed up piece of paper. As quick as lightening, he whisked it out of sight inside his camouflage jacket.

The piece of paper contained the following message: 'Plot against the court. Everything ready. You are the attackers from inside. In the next few days you will receive guns and ammunition. Exact time of the operation one day beforehand. Organise elimination of the guards, block cellar exit, occupy telephone switchboard. Give assent via food-porter. Three nods mean "yes". I am the contact-person. Will be in touch in two days. Good luck! Your S.S.-liberation battle-group. Destroy this message immediately.'

The guard passed her the glass of water. She drank, thanked him and went back through the endless stairways and passages until she reached the main corridor.

She realised that handing over that message carried with it a large element of risk. She had to reckon on the possibility that the guard would notice, that the S.S.-man would not pass the message on or that he might give it to the security unit in order to gain a personal advantage, that the S.S.-man could see the message as a deliberate forgery by the C.I.C., or that they took note of what it said, but refused to go along with it.

The midday recess was over. Gisela left the building. Two days later she could be sure that the battle-group could depend on the men of the S.S. work-detail. In the passage leading to the lift, one of the S.S.-men who were carrying the food in buckets nodded to her from a distance three times.

She went to see Lainz in Wiesental Street to deliver the report.

He invited her into his room and locked the door. It was tiny. The narrow window, barred on the outside, looked out on to a high brick wall. A sharp smell of lysol hung in the room.

'Sit here.' He pushed the only chair towards her, and sat down himself on the plank bed which took up half the room. 'I'm listening.'

She took her time. Deliberately, she unbuttoned her outsize raincoat. 'It's warm in here.' She produced a packet of Chesterfields from her pocket. 'Cigarette?'

He took one.

'I think I've taken care of everything now,' she said.

'It was about time. We've managed to get a message to your father.'

'To my father?' The ash fell from her cigarette.

'Yes. The operation is to be prepared down to the last detail. I assume your information covers everything.'

'It does.'

'So much the better.' He leaned back against the wall. 'I can't wait to hear it.'

She stubbed out her cigarette. For a moment she stared hard at the ceiling, trying to concentrate. Then she began her report.

'The court buildings consist of the central building, the west central building, the west wing, the east central building and the east wing. The court-room is in the east wing.'

'We know that. Begin with the prison area.'

'The prison area is laid out in the form of a star. At the intersection there's a sentry-box. The sentry keeps all the cell doors under constant observation by means of mirrors. In addition there's another guard posted beside each cell.'

'How do you know that?'

'From . . . ' She was about to say 'from Bob,' but she caught herself and said: 'From Lieutenant Hammersmith.'

'Go on.'

'The building where the prisoners are housed stands on a large tract of ground. It is separated both from the law-courts and Reutersbrunnen Street by an approximately twelve-foot-high . . . '

' . . . by a wall. We're aware of that.'

'Diagonally across, behind the prison building, seen from the law-courts, in a low, small structure, the gymnasium. About thirty yards from that is another one like it, the bakery. The Americans have specially built an exit in the front of the cell area opening on to the courtyard of the prison in the direction of the bakery and gymnasium.'

'Why?' He held the tiny glowing tip of his cigarette cupped in his hand, and took a last drag on it. Then he stamped it out on the floor.

'I forgot to mention,' she went on, disregarding his question, 'that the prisoners are kept on the ground floor of the cell block. Actually it's a raised ground floor, as the cellar windows come up high above the fosse.' She looked at him enquiringly to see if he understood her description.

'Go on. I'm with you.'

'From the new exit eight steps lead down to a wooden covered way, a gallery. The Americans have built it out of planks. It's closed off and roofed over. It goes across the courtyard.'

'Across the courtyard?'

'About forty or fifty yards. There's no chance there.'

'No comments. I make the decisions.'

'Sorry.'

'So the prisoners are taken across the courtyard for about fifty yards? Past the bakery?'

'Not directly. At a distance of approximately thirty yards away from it. But don't forget that the gallery is closed over, and has only a narrow opening under the roof for ventilation.'

'All right. Where does this wooden covered way lead?'

'To an underground passage which was there originally. It goes under the surrounding wall and into the basement of the court building.'

'Hmm.' He thought for a moment.

'It's useless,' she said, 'you can't get to them there.'

'Please leave that to me.'

'The basement vault is about eight feet high, twelve feet wide and between fifteen and twenty yards long. It's poorly lit; there are four lamps on the ceiling, and it's protected by grilles. The wires are exposed. At the end of the vault on the left-hand side is a small niche containing the door to the lift. The lift comes up directly behind the dock in the court-room, which is on the second floor.'

'You know all this from that Hammersmith too?'

'Everything that I could not find out for myself.'

'And he gave you the information willingly?'

'Yes.' She lowered her eyes. 'Yes, he did.' She spoke quietly. 'I told him I wanted to write a book about it some day. He is very ...' She hesitated.

'He is what?'

'He is very fond of me.' She said it quickly as though she wanted to get the thought out of her mind.

'My compliments.' He meant it quite sincerely. In the way that a secret service chief congratulates his agent on work well done. She, however, felt it as a blow to the midriff. She hoped earnestly the operation would begin as soon as possible. She wanted to put the time with Bob behind her, to forget it, not have it on her mind any more.

'Go on.'

'Yes, well . . . ' She needed a moment to concentrate again. 'Oh, yes The prisoners then travel in the lift straight to the court-room. They do not come into contact with anyone at all in the court building.'

'With one exception: at lunch.' With a superior air he folded his arms over his chest.'

'Yes,' she said, 'in the midday recess they are taken to have their meal.'

'Where to?'

'You're right,' she said, 'the midday recess is the only weak point in the security arrangements.'

'I want a factual report only. Nothing else. All right, where are the defendants taken to?'

'They remain on their benches until the room is completely empty. I should explain that the room empties on four sides. The judges have their exit to their rooms through a door close beside the bench. The exit for the interpreters is in the corner near the dock. But the interpreters' cubicles are separated from the accused by glass partitions. The interpreters leave the room through a small door behind them, go down a few steps and across a small vestibule into their separate dining-rooms. The press, observers and photographers not only have their own entrance to the building, but also their own entrance to the court-room. They do not mingle with the other people in the court. They leave their folding-seats and go out to the left to a hall. The Americans built this hall by putting up a wall in the wide corridor. The prosecutors, stenographers, defence counsel and all the people working with them enter and leave the court-room by the main entrance. A broad corridor leads from there straight to a stairway down to the first floor. She took a breath.

'Where and by what route are the prisoners taken to eat?' He got up from the bed and took half a step towards the window, which was all the narrowness of the room permitted. He could not conceal his agitation.

She remained unconcerned. 'The defendants are taken out through the main entrance. A double line of guards cordons off the landing from the entrance. About four yards from the high oak door of the main entrance is a small door leading to a narrow staircase. Inside this staircase, which is totally separated from the other rooms and corridors, a flight of narrow iron steps goes up steeply to the attic-floor. Up there are three small

interconnecting rooms. This is where the defendants eat.'

'Is there a kitchen up there too?'

'No. The food is brought up from below in large buckets.'

'So the iron stairs not only go up from the second storey, but also go down.'

'Yes. I'm sorry, I forgot to say that.'

'Where does the exit from the staircase lead to on the ground-floor?'

'On to the courtyard.'

'How do you get from there to the street?'

'Round the building to the right.'

'No sentries?'

'Just a barrier with two guards.'

'And the master-key from Hammersmith also closes the door to the courtyard?'

'Yes.' She explained how the door was reached from the ground-floor.

'And who brings the food up?'

'The food-porters.'

'Our people, then?'

'Yes. But the food is taken up a good half-hour before the beginning of the lunch-time recess. By the time the defendants start eating, the food-porters have been back down in the basement for some time.'

'Who serves up the food? An American?'

'No. A German.'

'One of our people?'

'No. Wehrmacht. A former quartermaster sergeant.'

'And he's been doing it since the beginning of the trial?'

'That I don't know.'

'All right. How strong is the guard detail up there?'

'I can't say exactly. But there are certainly as many guards as in the court-room directly guarding the accused. Also there are supposed to be a few sentries standing on the iron staircase and two in front of the door to the stairs on the second storey.'

'You mean the door on the hall of the main entrance to the court-room?'

'Yes. And then of course there's a particularly large number of guards in that hall and the large staircase adjoining it.'

'How many would you say?'

'All together?'

'Just those in the hall, in front of the door to the iron stair-

case and on the large staircase.'

She counted up in her head. 'At least twenty.'

'Are there only the three dining-rooms in the attic-storey? No storage-rooms, toilets and so on?'

'One toilet, yes. Other than that I don't know for sure.'

'Are all the accused taken up at once?'

'No. In groups.'

'How are they divided?'

'The first group consists of Goering, Kaltenbrunner, Seyss-Inquart, "Berger" and Frick.'

'And on the narrow stairs? Do all the accused go one after the other, or does a guard go in between each of them?'

'I don't know. I don't think I could find that out without making Lieutenant Hammersmith suspicious.' Her qualms about having to think of Bob while making this report had vanished. She mentioned him now like some distant acquaintance.

He sat on the bed again. He was thinking hard, searching for a solution. 'Are the sentries outside kept at the same strength day and night?'

'The permanent sentries outside are the same strength day and night.'

'And how many are they?'

'It's useless,' she said. 'I know you don't want to hear that. The outside sentries alone are maybe no more than ten men, but on top of that there are guards outside the wall which surrounds the whole prison and court area. That is - let me see - thirty men in all. And then there are the tanks. Two flanking the east wing. The other two posted on the corner of the west wing and in front of the wall of the prison block.'

'We know that,' he said after considering for a moment, and his voice now sounded comradely. 'So in your view the midday recess is our only chance?'

She nodded.

'I think so too. Our plan will be concentrated on the midday recess.'

'Perhaps you'd also like to take into account that the accused are in continuous contact with twelve Germans.'

'So our information was good after all.'

'There's the German prison medical officer, Dr. Ludwig Pflucker, then a German dentist, a barber, a prisoner-of war who goes from cell to cell with a large tin can of water and pours

water for the prisoners through the hatch in the door into their containers. Of course, he is accompanied by a guard. Also, the hatches on the doors have been enlarged by the Americans to ten inches by ten inches.'

'Who are the other eight?'

'There's the man who brings the cleaning things for the cells, like brooms and so on, then the man who collects the slops from the cells, two men who clean the passages in the cell block, and four men who work as food-porters.'

'And the food-porters and the cleaners are all German prisoners-of-war.'

'All members of the Waffen-S.S.'

'Our security measures in Berlin for the Olympic Games were more elaborate than that!'

'But the most unbelievable thing is,' she said, 'the men of the security unit have for the most part only had a short period of training. Many of them don't even know the proper way to hold a gun.'

'That's impossible!'

'It's true. I know it.'

'That's incredible!' He laughed out loud, and then immediately became serious again. 'Have you got another Chesterfield?'

She offered him the packet, and they each lit up.

For a while it was quiet in the room. They smoked, and each followed their own thoughts. Finally Lainz tapped the ash from his cigarette. 'And where do the judges take their lunch? And the prosecutors? Where does Jackson eat?'

'One storey down there's a snack-bar.'

'*Snack-bar*? What's that?'

'A bar for quick meals. Apparently America is full of them.'

'And that's where Jackson eats?'

'The snack-bar has two adjoining rooms. One is for the judges and the other's reserved for the prosecution.'

'And the defence?'

'They eat in their own rooms.'

'This - snack-bar,' he could only speak the word with distaste, 'is it guarded?'

'No. Only the entrance to the corridor.'

'And who serves there?'

'American soldiers.'

'If I've understood you correctly, the judges and prosecutors

have to go from their rooms along the corridor to the stairs, then go down one floor and along another corridor to this . . . to their dining-rooms?’

‘Yes. But sometimes they also eat in their rooms. It’s not always the same.’

‘All right.’ He ground out the cigarette with his foot and stood up. The discussion was over. ‘Until the 23rd of May.’ He took a step towards the door.

She got up too.

‘The 23rd of May?’

‘That’s when we meet by the Dutzend Lake. All of us. At nine in the morning, close to the “Water Lily”. There’s a path that leads from there along the edge of the lake which will be deserted at that hour. Another two hundred yards on there’s a bend. We’ll be undisturbed there.’

‘And what happens there?’

‘I shall give the plan of action in every detail. Now I must go.’

‘Until the 23rd of May,’ she said. Then she left the room, and he took her down the long dingy corridor to the front door.

At the corner of Brücken Street she stopped. She felt a desire to take some deep breaths of air.

In Frankfurt am Main the Old Town between the River Main and the Zeil consisted only of rubble, ashes and the lifeless remains of houses. In spite of this, a great deal of activity took place at this very spot – the secret meetings of the underground, the black market, and free love.

In the middle of this landscape of ruins there rose majestically the red sandstone steeple of St. Bartholomew’s Cathedral. The innumerable bombs and mines had not hit it.

Above its gallery towered the huge eight-sided superstructure with its cupola and the filigree spire which pointed to the sky as though in silent accusation.

At the south door, the two reliefs, Adoration of the Kings and Christ on the Cross, were covered with a thick layer of brick-dust. The eyes of the figures they portrayed stared straight across to a hut on the edge of a ruined house.

It was built of wood and not particularly big. It even had a name – The Cookie-House. Inside it lived the 70-year-old Frieda ‘Ma’ Weickel. Anybody who was anybody knew her. ‘Ma’ had partitioned the hut into several tiny rooms and rented

them out for 20 Reichsmarks. She ran the first brothel in Frankfurt after the war.

A hollow-cheeked youth named Lothar Wilfarth also frequented The Cookie-House from time to time. He was twenty years old and until the end of the war he had led a branch of the local Hitler Youth in Stolp, Pomerania. The retreat had brought him to the Taunus, where he met Hemmersbach, the former *S.S.-Standartenführer*. Their opinions regarding the occupying powers proved to agree at once. Hemmersbach introduced him to Lainz.

When Lothar Wilfarth was not engaged in his black-market deals in the nearby Fahr Lane or in Braubach Street, he would be peddling on Lange Street, known popularly as 'Ruin Boulevard', or else he would honour 'Ma' Weickel with a visit.

The rest of his time he spent literally underground.

The works department of the City of Frankfurt had turned the cellars of the houses round the cathedral into a many-branched system of catacombs at the beginning of the war. The walls of the cellars were broken through. In bombing raids it was primarily the old gabled houses which were threatened. Their inhabitants were supposed to save themselves by going through the many newly-constructed connecting passages into the neighbouring cellars.

After the war, these extensive tunnels and galleries had become the dwelling-place of thousands of people. They lived in half-collapsing vaults and rotting shafts. They slept on mattresses made of sea-weed half eaten away with decay, and they covered themselves with blankets which were constantly damp, ignoring the spoiled remains of food, mouldering rags and pieces of smashed bottles lying beside them.

In this labyrinth the outcasts of post-war society struggled to exist. Here the homeless gathered, the poorest of the poor, children without parents, and those who were wanted by the occupying forces of all the zones.

Here, in the Frankfurt cellars between the Zeil and the right bank of the Main, they were safe.

As time went by, pimps, criminals and thieves also settled in, and disappeared from the reach of the police. For as little as 5 Reichsmarks half-starved girls offered their favours on the cold earthen floors of the ill-ventilated cellars. Brawls, robbery and murder on a scale unheard of elsewhere in Germany dominated the life of this underground community.

The inhabitants of the city avoided this neighbourhood. In letters to the Military Government, they demanded that the cellars, along with their filthy contents, should be simply crushed. The newspapers printed letters saying: 'Cover over the area around the cathedral with concrete, then we will be rid of the vermin!'

The people in the catacombs had adapted themselves to living like rats. Here, among all the rubbish, the harassment and the hopelessness, lived Lothar Wilfarth. A few weeks before, Hemmersbach had sent him two comrades. Karl Nessen came from Genthin, in Brandenburg, and Utz Grau from Taucha, near Leipzig.

In a few days, the three of them had set up an alarm system in the tunnels and vaults. At each entrance and intersection of the underground passages they laid slightly curved pieces of tin on the ground. If a stranger ventured into the galleries, he could not help stepping on the tin, and the noise of it would warn everyone who had anything to hide.

This earned Wilfarth, Nessen and Grau recognition in the catacombs. Nevertheless, they were longing for the day when they would be released from this cave-dwellers' life. They had made up their minds to risk their lives once more for their future, and longed to be sent to Nuremberg by Hemmersbach.

On the 22nd of May 1946 they arrived. They spent the night before Thursday not far from the railway station, on the bomb-site of 1 Enderlein Street. Next morning they set off early towards the Dutzend Lake.

The Water-Lily was an inn with a garden in front, to the left of Bavaria Street and just in front of the platform underpass. Each of the three ordered a cup of coffee, and they waited till nine o'clock. Then they paid, and crossed the street. They saw Lainz coming from some way off. He was walking down Bavaria Street. Greeting them with a short nod, he told them their lodgings had been taken care of, and sent them round the lake to the bend in the footpath.

Ralf Schilling and Bruno Peters arrived together. Lainz directed them, and they followed the others at an easy pace. Elmar Stührk came from the direction of Waldlust Street. He reached Lainz at the same time as Gisela.

At the curve, they all sat down on the bank behind the bushes. There was a good view of the path from there. Lainz began with the briefing on his plan of action.

'I'll come to your part last, Schilling. Meanwhile you keep watch for us.'

'Right.' Schilling began to stand up, but Lainz held him back.

'No, from here.' Then he turned to Peters. 'You first. The original plan, in which you were the man specially concerned with Kaltenbrunner, has been dropped.'

'Right.' Peters was relieved. Freeing Kaltenbrunner had meant that if necessary he would have had to place himself in the hands of the guards in the *Obergruppenführer's* stead. Apart from the fact that he had always regarded the plan as Utopian, a kind of 'cowboys and Indians' game, it would have been tantamount to a certain death sentence for him. Although he was prepared to risk his life in the operation, he was still happy not to be wholly without a chance of survival.

'Peters, you will receive a civilian suit.'

'Right.'

'Also this identity card.' He drew a packet of forged I.M.T. cards out of his jacket pocket. 'With that you can enter the court building as an observer in the press-balcony. The cards are made out in different names. Yours, for example, is for . . . ' He read: ' . . . for Herbolsheimer. Clear?'

'Yes.'

'You will try out this identity card tomorrow. You will be present at the session of the court.'

'Are German observers allowed then?'

'Yes. The regulations were eased a short time ago.'

'And the identity card has no photograph?'

'None of these cards has a photograph, luckily for us. There are even group permits made out for only one name. Like, say, Herbolsheimer and twenty people. But we don't want to use those. So, Peters, tomorrow after the proceedings you will make a report.'

'Right.'

'I shall now explain the lay-out and the storeys and areas which we are particularly concerned with. Schilling, can you keep watch and listen at the same time?'

'Yes,' said Schilling, without taking his eyes off the path.

'After my description of the building, you may ask questions.' He took a sketch he had made of the lay-out of the law-courts from his pocket and had it passed from hand to hand while he explained it. 'Anyone have any questions?'

They shook their heads. Lainz cleared his throat. 'Then we

can now get down to the details. Stührk, Wilfarth and Nessen will get camouflage suits. You will smuggle yourselves into the Hersbruck Camp the evening before. There you will organise a fighting force of twelve men. In the morning you will have yourselves taken on the transport used to bring S.S. prisoners-of war into the court building to work there. Over the past days, Fräulein Silinski has brought sufficient pistols into the building and you'll find them hidden in the toilets for the kitchen detail, stuck to the inner walls of the cisterns with tape. Everything clear so far?' He looked round the circle. They all nodded.

'At midday you take the places of the food-porters.' As before, he addressed Stührk, Wilfarth and Nessen. 'You delay taking the food-buckets out. When the guards try to hurry you along, play stupid. You keep holding everything up until the defendants are taken up the stairs. That will be at about seven minutes past one. As soon as the first group of defendants, that is Goering, Kaltenbrunner, 'Berger', Seyss-Inquart and Frick, go up, you lock the door up there with counterfeit keys from the outside and go down. Without any warning, shoot the guards. The surprise effect will be so overwhelming that the other guards on the staircase, approximately four of them, will be overcome by panic.'

He turned to Peters. 'Meanwhile, Peters has been watching the morning session until twelve fifty-nine. One minute before one o'clock, he leaves his place on the observers' balcony and goes into the vestibule. A door leads from there to the mezzanine, and from there, on the ground-floor, there is one opening on to the courtyard. Am I explaining this correctly?' He looked at Gisela Silinski.

'Yes,' she said. 'In the vestibule of the press and observers' balcony, there's a stone drinking-fountain on the left-hand side. Beside it is a door leading to the corridor which communicates with the east central building. At the very beginning of the east central building is a flight of marble steps down to the lower floors. On the ground-floor, the second door on the left leads into the courtyard. The master-key opens both doors.'

'Thank you.' Lainz turned to Peters again. 'You go to the right on the courtyard and come to the iron door which leads to the staircase on which the prisoners are taken up. Since you are not to show any sign of haste and cover the distance at a normal walking pace, you will arrive at precisely the right time.

Should you be too early, contrary to expectations, then wait inside the building. Understood?

'Yes.'

'If you come across a guard in front of the door, shoot him down as soon as you hear the shots inside, then push the door open, leap up the stairs and shoot from below on any surviving guards. Whoever gets to the door leading to the vestibule and the main entrance of the court-room, in other words, the door through which the prisoners are taken upstairs, is to lock it immediately on the inside. Clear?'

Almost in unison, Peters, Stührk, Wilfarth and Nessen said 'Yes.'

'There are now four of you. Each one grabs his man. That is, each one takes the prisoner standing closest to him. Goering, Kaltenbrunner, Seyss-Inquart and 'Berger'. Frick is left behind. You leave the staircase through the door on the ground-floor, take the defendants as quickly as possible round the corner to the right towards the barrier. Precisely at that moment I come from the direction of Bärenschanz Street. I kill the guards and meet the liberated men at the barrier.' He made a pause in order to start afresh. 'In the meantime, you' – he indicated Gisela – 'will have left the observers' balcony and gone via the first storey back from the east central building to the east wing and up the stairway to the main entrance of the court-room. As soon as you hear firing, draw your gun and keep the guards and people in the vestibule in check.'

'May I say something?'

She spoke quietly. Her voice was thick, her face drained of colour.

'Yes?' He looked up disapprovingly.

'If it can be managed, I would like to be given a different role.'

'A different role? For what reason?'

She hesitated before replying. She had not been prepared for this possibility. It never occurred to her that Lainz might assign her to just the position where she would inevitably meet Bob.

Her thoughts roared wildly through her head. She saw herself pointing a pistol at Bob, saw his horrified face, saw him as he walked towards her, pale as a corpse, to try and take the gun away from her, as she fired and he lay before her in a pool of blood.

'I asked you for what reason?'

'Reason?' She snapped out of it. 'I don't know. I just think I'm not up to it. In that position I would be a one hundred per cent risk.'

'There's no other way. Someone has to keep the guards on the landing off our backs.'

'What about Schilling and Grau?'

'You are the only one whose presence on the landing wouldn't arouse suspicion. It's possible that you won't have to shoot.'

'And if I have to shoot? And fail?'

He was getting annoyed. 'Why should you fail?'

'Because I know myself.'

'Can't you manage it just this once? Think of your father!'

'Do you want to put it to the test like that?'

He gave in. 'All right. You change places with Grau. You have the truck ready on the corner of Fürth Street. Sit at the wheel. Cover our retreat with your gun if necessary. Clear?'

'Yes.'

'Grau, you take Fräulein Silinski's place then.'

'Right.'

'You make them all lean facing the wall with their hands above their heads. Take their guns. You'll have a thin, folded sack for that under your suit. At the slightest movement, shoot!'

Grau nodded.

'And now Schilling. Grau, you take over from Schilling as look-out.'

Schilling turned towards Lainz. 'Yours is the most difficult job. You watch the proceedings like Peters and Grau, go back via the first floor of the east central building to the landing in front of the court-room and then go on through the swing-doors to the left of the main entrance. The swing-doors lead to a small landing. On the right there are the steps which go up to the door leading to the interpreters' cubicles. Straight ahead is the door to the judges' rooms. You go in there. Do you know who the judges are?'

'Yes.'

'If you can, take the chief judge; his name's Lawrence. He won't put up any resistance from the look of him. With him as a shield, you are the last of the battle-group to leave the building. You are our rearguard. Should Lawrence happen not to be in the room, get the next best one. You leave the building with your hostage, cross over Bärenschanz Street and get into the

truck standing ready with the hostage. Understood?"

'Yes.' Schilling's voice revealed the pride he felt in being chosen for this special task.

'As soon as Schilling and the hostage are in the truck, we drive off. Our start will be between one and two minutes. The route goes for about two hundred yards in the direction of Fürth, then hard left down Maximilian and Von-der-Tann Street to the Rothenburg Street crossroads. Three cars will be standing ready to go there, two BMWs and an NSU. In less than twenty seconds we get out of the truck and into the cars. Peters and Stührk with Seyss-Inquart and Kaltenbrunner take the first car, a BMW. Wilfarth, Nessen and Grau get in the second BMW with 'Berger'. And the rest, that is Schilling, Silmski, the Reich Marshal, the hostage and me, take the NSU. The car with Peters at the wheel drives via Gustav-Adolf and Hanse Street, along the Outer Ring to the Regensburg Road and from there on to the autobahn to Berlin. Wilfarth, at the wheel of the second BMW follows Peters as far as the autobahn, and then turns off towards Munich. Schilling, driving the NSU, will be directed by me. The car with Peters leaves the autobahn at the Veldenstein Forest Exit. He will be met by a contact. The password is "loyalty". The man will take you to safe hiding places, and after a few days across the German border to Switzerland, then to Lisbon and from there on to a ship to Buenos Aires. The car with Wilfarth driving goes as far as the Hipolstein Exit. There you transfer to a blue delivery-van with a blue awning. The password is "honour". The driver will take you to Thalmassing. From there you will also be brought to Lisbon and put on a ship to Buenos Aires. We will meet again in Buenos Aires. The contact-men have their instructions. Anyone who can't keep up, misses his connection or gets picked up, will be left behind regardless. Understood?"

They nodded.

'That is the plan of action for you. Our comrades, the twelve members of the Waffen-S.S., will hold the entrances and exits in the basements. They will take hostages too. After the operation is complete, two cars with full petrol-tanks will be standing ready for their getaway.' His eyes went from one to other. 'Everything clear?'

'Yes.'

'One further point. The operation is carried out as a surprise attack. The signal is given by the shots from Stührk, Wilfarth

and Nessen. After that, not more than fifty or sixty seconds should have passed before we reach the truck. Anyone who doesn't come with us doesn't stand a chance. Remember that and make sure you know every move and every step exactly!

Stührk raised his hand.

'Yes?'

'I have a question. Couldn't we also shoot a few of the defence counsel? Those men . . . ' He pulled his face into a grimace.

'No!' Lainz cut him short. 'If just one of you fails to stick to the minutest detail of the plan, he will endanger the entire operation! Any more stupid questions?'

There was silence.

'Then the discussion is over. You will leave here singly. One day before the operation, you will be informed by me personally. If I should happen not to catch one of you, I will leave a code-word. The code-word is "sunrise". That means that the operation will be mounted the following midday. For Wilfarth, Stührk and Nessen it means they must be inside Hersbruck Camp by that evening at the latest. Go out there today and spy out the situation. A man called Koch will help you. You'll find him near the station. He has a stationery and tobacconist shop there. Just mention my name to him, and he will show you how to get into the camp. For Peters, Schilling and Grau, "sunrise" means that they have to be in the court-room by ten next morning. They must get into the law-courts at least half an hour before that. Their guns, like those of our prisoner-of-war comrades, are hanging inside the cisterns of the toilets for the German observers of the trial. Each one has to smuggle his own ammunition in himself. The best place is in your shoes. For Fräulein Silinski "sunrise" means she must get in touch with me immediately in order to get the truck. Any more questions?'

They spoke the word 'no' with one voice.

'Till "sunrise" then.'

They broke up.

Peters crossed Bavaria Street and turned off into Dutzend Lake Street. He did not notice that a man was following him. The man was fifty-six years old, small and the most remarkable thing about him was his bushy eyebrows. It was the former detective inspector Richard Billsteiner.

He had shadowed Peters from his lodgings in Schlossacker Street as far as the Water-Lily Restaurant. For an hour, he had then sat on the railway-embankment behind a bush and watched

the meeting of seven men and one woman from a distance of a good seventy yards. But apart from the fact that they had sat together, he had not observed anything suspicious. All the same, he decided to tell Clinton Keen about the meeting.

Two hours later he was standing in the office of the C.I.C. Clinton was walking up and down with gawky strides. 'And you also recognised the second man, the one from Landshut?'

'Definitely.'

Billsteiner sounded sure of himself.

'And the woman?'

'Never seen her before.'

'How old? What did she look like? Tall, short?'

'From that distance, hard to tell. Also she was sitting.'

'But she must have walked away like the others.'

'Yes, but the man from Schlossäcker Street went before she did. I didn't want to lose him.'

'Try to describe her anyway.'

Billsteiner took a moment. 'Let's say between twenty-five and thirty-five. Very pretty. Shoulder-length, dark hair. Maybe brown, maybe reddish.' He thought again. 'I can't say more than that.'

Joe Stevens stood by the window and noted down the particulars. 'What can we do?'

Clinton ran his fingers through his crew-cut hair. Then he took down his dark blue jacket from the hook and put it on. 'We're going to get the man from Schlossäcker Street! Call up the M.P.'

Peters had just gone over to the Frauentorgraben to buy a packet of American cigarettes on the black market. As he was going back down Tafelfeld Street he saw two jeeps belonging to the Military Police parked on the corner of Schlossäcker Street.

He changed direction and went on a few streets further. For three hours he hid on a stretch of ruined ground. Then he sent a boy to the man who owned the house in which he was staying. A few minutes later he knew that the double posse of Military Police had been looking for him.

He got in touch with Lainz via Schilling. 'Rubbish!' said Lainz. 'They're after you? So what? They know nothing about the battle-group!'

Peters reminded him: 'But what if that Steinbronn in Landshut...?'

‘Not a chance! They would have picked us up long ago!’ He turned to Schilling and pointed at Peters. ‘He gets new quarters, that’s all. The operation proceeds as planned.’

Chapter Ten

Those who knew Barbara Vesenstedt well knew that she was not especially prepossessing at first sight. Her severe face was only fascinating when looked at more closely. She was under no illusions – the men who took notice of her had all known her for a considerable time. What they admired her for were her humane and intellectual qualities. They never thought of simply spending time with her.

Those evenings on which she and her father took a stroll from their lodgings in Copernicus Street over to Allersberg Street, she welcomed as an unusual change. If she could then persuade him to go into the Binz Inn to drink a glass of beer, she felt happy.

Today, the 23rd of May, her father was in Coburg. He wanted to find out how Claudius was, before presenting his case for the defence of his client. An improvement in his condition would do 'Berger's' morale a lot of good. Only in the best physical, and above all mental, state would he be able to withstand the difficult days of giving evidence as a witness and of cross-examination.

Barbara had supported his decision to go to Coburg. She enjoyed being alone for a day. During the day she had attended both sessions of the trial and taken a few notes. Now, towards evening, she wandered aimlessly through the residential district where their lodgings were. Her route passed close by the Binz Inn. She hesitated, wondering whether she should go into the pub alone, but her hand was already on the door-handle.

She found a seat at the table in the corner by the window, ordered a beer and began to feel at ease. She watched the people at the tables around her and without meaning to, was listening to conversations here and there and letting her thoughts drift, when a man of about fifty brought up the subject of the trial and said that the defence was 'infected by the occupying powers!' She declared herself, and a stormy discussion broke out on the

question of whether the defending counsel were generally speaking for or against the defendants.

Even if Barbara had noticed the hollow-cheeked boy at the next table, and seen the cold, angry looks he gave her, she would have expressed her opinions. She concluded her arguments with the words: 'If you defend a person who has committed a murder, you are forced to resist the pressure of moral condemnation. But here the charge isn't one murder, but millions of murders. The moral taint is enormous. It's not possible to withstand it.'

The boy Elmar Stührk came over from the neighbouring table. He was making an effort to hide his anger, and forced himself to smile. 'Does that mean,' he said to Barbara in an almost friendly voice, 'that in your view, the indictment is valid?'

'Yes,' she said, barely audibly, 'that's what I mean.'

Stührk mumbled something incoherent and disappeared.

On her way home, as she was crossing the dimly-lit and deserted Allersberg Street, he barred her way. 'I'd like to talk to you.'

Barbara was forced to stop. 'Leave me alone!'

'Don't you recognise me then?'

'No.' She stepped round him and continued on her way.

In Körner Street he caught up with her again. This time his voice rang out harshly. 'Didn't you say just now that the defence thought the indictment was valid?'

Determinedly, she went on without answering.

'I asked you a question!' With his legs astride, he placed himself in front of her. 'Is the indictment valid?'

Again she tried to get past him. He leaped to the side so that she bumped into him. Her expression was full of contempt. 'If you don't leave me alone, I'll call the police!'

He laughed. 'The police! What police? I'm asking you for the last time: is the indictment valid?'

'Yes!' As though to defend herself, she screamed it in his face.

His clenched fist hit and struck her on the temple. She wanted to call for help, wanted to run away, but could not move. The pain that shot through her head stunned her. Offering no resistance, she let her arms hang by her sides, and Stührk struck out again.

Feeling the blood running out of her mouth, she suddenly overcame her paralysis and began to scream. Afterwards she was

unable to say how long she had screamed or how often she had been hit by the boy. She had no recollection of collapsing, of the men who pulled him off her. They had rushed out of the neighbouring houses and taken care of her. By the time she could stand up again, the boy had disappeared.

None of the men could describe him, and none of them had seen which direction he had taken. Not even Barbara could help with any information. All she could recall about the boy now was his eyes.

She made her way back home unsteadily. In the bathroom she attended to her wounds with a cold wet cloth. Next morning she was sufficiently recovered to be able to watch the court proceedings.

At lunch in the defence canteen, she met her father who had just come back from Coburg. She told him the story in detail. He listened, put his hand soothingly on hers and looked with concern at her still-swollen face. 'Are you all right?'

She tried to smile. 'Yes.'

'These times, my dear, are our destiny,' he said softly.

'Perhaps you're right,' she said quietly, 'but can't you struggle against your destiny?'

'Certainly. Against an individual destiny. But the times are too strong.' He felt inside the breast-pocket of his jacket, and handed her a letter. 'Here.'

She read it through rapidly, and looked up in amazement. 'But it's not possible! When did you get this letter?'

'Yesterday. In the mail sent to the law-courts. One of many. I just want to show you how crazy these times are.'

The letter, as the regulations required, bore the names of the senders, several people from Friedberg in the Taunus region. They accused Vesenstedt of doing a great disservice to the cause of justice as a lawyer by defending the actions of the Nazis. They used offensive language, attacking him with a flood of vituperation and threatening to take revenge on his family, particularly on Barbara.

'Apparently these are people who suffered a great deal under Nazi rule. Now they are against anyone who in their opinion stands on the Nazis' side.'

'But, you're not on the Nazis' side! That is absolutely absurd!'

'You must understand their feelings. Put yourself in their position; they've become blind to the world around them. They

can't conceive why the chief defendants are given this kind of long drawn out trial instead of being strung up out of hand from the nearest tree.'

'But they can't call you a Nazi! You of all people!'

'They still feel themselves constantly threatened and betrayed, and suspect everyone of being secretly against them. They no longer have any faith in people. How could they? Their wounds are still too fresh.'

'They're fanatics!'

'Of course they're under the influence of a certain fanaticism in their hatred, that can't be disputed. And fanaticism clouds the mind. It's the great enemy of mankind, regardless of which side it originates from. But for us here, it's our duty to find understanding for these people. It's not for them to win our trust, but for us to win theirs. That cannot be achieved overnight. It may take years, possibly even decades.'

She thought about what he had said finally, 'You're right. Probably if I were in their shoes, I'd react in the same way. But they're threatening us. Are you going to simply accept it?'

'If it could be arranged, I'd like to try to talk to them.'

'But since it presumably can't be arranged . . .'

'You can rest assured, dear, nothing will happen to you. I'll write them a few lines explaining my position.'

That evening, they came back to the topic of the letter. Vesenstedt sat without a word at the table in their living-room and wrote his reply to Friedberg. Barbara thanked him with a kiss on the forehead.

The next day was a Saturday, the 25th of May. Vesenstedt was preparing breakfast.

'You're spoiling me,' Barbara said.

'Not without an ulterior motive,' he said. 'I'd like you to go to Burgfarrnbach in my place.'

'To Henrike "Berger"?'

'Yes, I can't get away. I'm expecting one of "Berger's" former assistants. He should be my only witness. And since I have to reckon on the presentation of our evidence beginning next week . . .'

'You don't have to explain anything to me. I'll go. I'm even quite happy to go. What am I supposed to talk to her about?'

'I just want her to hear about Claudius. But I have a request. Take the train. I know it's only about four miles from Fürth, but . . .'

'It's obvious the letter has had an effect on you after all. All right, I'll go by train.'

She arrived in Burgfarrnbach at about noon. Henrike 'Berger' took her message calmly. 'And what chance do the doctors give him?'

'My father didn't say anything about the prognosis.'

'I'll go to Coburg again first thing tomorrow morning.' Henrike looked abstracted as she sat opposite her. Her hands were clasped together so tightly that the knuckles stood out 'I must find out for sure. Please convey my sincere thanks to your father. He truly shows great sympathy for our misfortune. His consolation is all that sustains me at the moment.'

Until then Barbara had never had a full conversation with Henrike 'Berger'. She had only met her once in Nuremberg, when Henrike had come to see her in their lodgings in order to clarify the problems of a possible witness affidavit. At that time, Barbara had had the impression of a resolute and self-controlled woman, though the exterior had struck her as somewhat unpleasant.

But today the impression was quite different. Suddenly she seemed closer and more understandable.

'Would you like me to accompany you to Coburg?'

'It's very sweet of you, but I feel I should go there on my own. I have to cope myself. Thank you so much, but I can't accept your offer. I hope you're not offended.'

'Not at all. Anyway, you know that you can always ask me if you need help.'

They parted as two people who had taken a step closer to one another. Barbara went down the narrow street towards the station past the school and the Bavarian Police barracks. At the barrier of the little station, she took her place among the crowd of waiting passengers. The train was due in the next few minutes. Time passed, and it was more than an hour overdue. Meanwhile the people for the next train had already arrived. The jostling behind the barrier became unbearable.

Eventually the station official opened up the grille and punched the tickets. The crowd poured on to the platform as the train steamed in.

The people moved towards it, rushed at the carriage doors, pushing, shoving and lunging, and before she could do anything about it she was lifted up and found herself jammed in the

overcrowded compartment opposite the friendly, unshaven face of a young man.

The worn forage cap of the former German Wehrmacht sat jauntily on the back of his head. She noticed he was wearing an army jacket. The two top buttons were undone, exposing a tanned, masculine chest.

Suddenly a painful blow hit her in the back. It took away her breath for a moment.

'You don't seem to have noticed this isn't a cattle-truck!' The man in the threadbare cap shouted over her head across the compartment, and his voice sounded clear and firm.

'Hey, you shut your mouth!' came the reply.

He was not to be put off. 'If you really want me to teach you a lesson I'll oblige. We're not having any more pushing in here. And then he spoke to Barbara in a quieter voice. 'I'm sorry. But these yokels think we're still at war. Did I frighten you?'

'No, no,' she said, 'I'm still alive.'

He laughed.

In Fürth many of the passengers got out, but many more got in. The people standing up were jostled about and Barbara lost sight of the man in the forage cap.

As she was hurrying along the underpass in Nuremberg with everyone else heading for the exit, he suddenly appeared beside her. 'That's lucky! I thought I'd missed you back in Fürth.'

'Oh, it's you!' she said without stopping. 'Did I lose something?'

'Yes,' he said, 'me,' and they laughed.

After they had gone through the turnstile he stopped, and so did she. Only then did she see that he had a fully-packed rucksack on his back. 'Did you have that on the whole time?'

'Of course. That's why it was such a squeeze in the compartment.'

'Does that mean you're just coming back from a hoarding expedition?'

'Wrong. I've just come back from Russia.'

'From Russia?' She stared at him.

'Is that so strange then?'

'To me it is. I always thought . . .'

' . . . Russia meant more or less "buried alive", right?'

'That's about it. And do you live here in Nuremberg?'

'No. I'm just stopping off here. Once I had, well, let's say a lady I knew here. But who knows if she's still around?' He

shrugged his shoulders. 'Do you by any chance know where Röntgen Street is?'

'That ought to be in my neighbourhood. There's a Humboldt, a Leibnitz and a Gabelsberger Street. Why shouldn't there be a street for Herr Rontgen too? We could ask someone.'

'Why bother? We'll take a chance. If it's all right with you, I'll guard your flank till you get home. You've just seen what dangers threaten young ladies these days.'

'You're exaggerating.'

'But if we are going the same way anyway?'

'If you like. But I can't guarantee that it'll get you to Röntgen Street.'

They went through the Celtis Underpass, and a quarter of an hour later stood in front of number 4 Copernicus Street. 'Isn't your rucksack getting too heavy for you?'

'Until yesterday I was carrying two.'

'Two rucksacks?'

'One on top of the other. One belonged to a friend who'd joined up with me on the way. War-wounded. Only one leg.'

'And where's your friend now?'

'In Wurzburg he suddenly got a yen for the Palatinate. We all do what we can. Now I'd better get going . . .' he corrected himself: 'I'll try to find Röntgen Street . . .'

For a moment she was sorry he was going. She liked his uncomplicated manner. In contrast to the people who surrounded her every day and who were completely oppressed by their problems, she found the meeting with him a refreshing change. She told him so.

He was embarrassed. 'We all do our bit.'

'Well, I wish you enough strength to do yours, anyway.'

'Don't worry I've got that. Well . . .'

'Goodbye. Thanks for guarding my flank. And all the best.'

'Thanks, same to you. Goodbye.' He turned to go and paused for a moment. 'By the way, my name's Tanner. Paul Tanner.'

'My name is Vesenstedt.' Then she quickly went into the hall.

Dr. Gebhard Vesenstedt was successful. Although he had only given himself one chance in a hundred, his single witness had been found. Early that afternoon he had come to the door.

He was an insignificant-looking man, respectable, with no notable outer characteristics. 'Good afternoon, my name's Winold von Günwig.' It sounded meek.

Vesenstedt spent three hours explaining the purpose of his efforts and the reason he had called him in particular to be his only witness.

'It seems to me proper,' replied Günwig at the end, 'to point out to you that at the age of fifty-eight I'll be appearing before a court for the first time.'

'So much the better.'

'I must tell you, I have my doubts. My nerves are not of the best.'

'All you have to do is to answer truthfully the questions which are put to you.'

'One can answer a question in several ways without avoiding the truth.'

'Herr von Günwig, I can do no more than keep my fingers crossed for you and for us. Everything else depends on too many imponderables.'

'I'm sorry Dr. Vesenstedt, I haven't been able to make myself sufficiently plain. Please forgive me, therefore, if I put it more clearly. I've come in order to refuse your request.'

'You don't mean you've come all the way from Hannover to Nuremberg to tell me I can't count on you? Four hundred miles!'

'Yes, Dr. Vesenstedt, I've always been a very correct person.'

'That's precisely why I beg you to go to the witness-box for your former superior.'

'I can't do it. I'd put the noose round his and my neck.'

Vesenstedt was on the point of sending the man away. A witness who was afraid of himself could do more harm than good, especially before this court.

Two weeks before, he had regarded his request to summon his client's former personal assistant as a witness, as his best tactical move. Nothing had been too much trouble, no difficulty too great, if it meant getting hold of Winold von Günwig.

How often he had trod the roundabout and endless way from the east wing to the central building during the breaks in the proceedings in order to persuade the General Secretariat of the necessity of this man's appearing.

When he was successful in the laborious process of tracing his address, the General Secretariat had set itself against letting him go to Hannover to get in touch with Günwig. The haggling began over the issue of petrol. Finally, through an acquaintance in the municipal government of Erlangen, he managed to get

petrol coupons for Bavaria. But since he could get none for Hesse or for the British Zone, it seemed as if the journey would be impossible. But then the friend in Erlangen promised to drive him in his 'wood-gas car'.

The Germans used the 'wood-gas car' to help them through the period of petrol shortage. On the back of the car, or occasionally beside the bonnet, an oven in the form of a bath stove with a grate was built on. Underneath that a lead-pipe ran to a fan fixed to the outer wall. On top of the oven was an opening with a lid, and through this sodden wood was loaded in. To one side of the opening was a tube leading to the carburettor.

A good hour before the start of a journey, a fire had to be lit in the grate. The fan, driven by the battery, whipped up the flames. The wood smouldered and turned to charcoal, and as it did so, gases were given off which were drawn into the carburettor.

Every thirty to forty miles, Vesenstedt and the owner of the car had to refill the oven in order to keep the engine running. Once, past Fulda, they forgot and the ceremony of getting the oven going had to start all over again.

In Hannover Vesenstedt searched for Günwig all round Lister Square. A postman sent him to 119 Jacoby Street. The Günwig he found there was the brother of the man he was looking for. All he could tell him was that his brother was staying in Soltau for the present.

As the owner of the 'wood-gas car' was getting impatient to return to Erlangen, Vesenstedt left his address and Günwig's brother promised to attend to the matter.

When the letter from Winold von Günwig arrived in Nuremberg, Vesenstedt breathed a sigh of relief.

Today, when Günwig had come and sat down in front of him, Vesenstedt had thought he had finally achieved his goal. Now, however, after their lengthy debate, he was on the point of giving up. He talked about morality, responsibility and helping one's fellow men; he had drawn on his entire range of persuasive skills, but without making any impression on the man.

He tried one last time. 'I'll make you a proposal.'

'Aren't you wasting your valuable time with me?' Günwig spoke more to himself than to Vesenstedt.

'This concerns the man with whom you worked for years in the most complete harmony. The man who helped you achieve what were probably the most successful years of your life. These

years were successful for you, were they not?’

‘Yes,’ he replied hesitatingly. ‘And what’s your proposal?’

‘I’ll relieve you of the fear of saying something wrong.’

‘You’re not in a position to do that. This fear is inborn. It was probably the fear that always made me stay second-in-command. Without that weight on my chest, I might perhaps be standing here today as chief defendant, and you might be my defence counsel.’

‘Would that have bolstered your self-confidence?’ The conversation began, quite naturally, to take on a more personal tone. Vesenstedt noticed how Günwig was gradually losing his reserve.

‘Probably any other man would answer the question with a definite “no”. The answer isn’t so simple for me. You’ve found my vulnerable point, my lack of self-confidence. Of course I wouldn’t like to stand here as a defendant. But you’re right. It would have bolstered up my self-confidence if I’d been able to break out of my role as second-in-command.’

‘Herr von Günwig, even as a so-called second-in-command you must expect to be brought before a court sooner or later. This main trial is far from marking the end of the charges against the leaders and subordinate leaders of the Third Reich.’

‘I do see that.’

‘In short, the evidence which you give as a witness here will count in your favour as a defendant.’

‘You were going to explain your proposal to me.’

‘Yes. We’ll go over each question and each answer in every detail together. In this way you can go into the witness-box without fear of unpleasant surprises.’

Vesenstedt omitted to mention that the prior agreement on questions and answers was normal practice. He could see no other way of persuading Günwig to give evidence.

The unforeseen, time-consuming testimonies of Sauckel, Jodl and Seyss-Inquart delayed the presentation of evidence by the defence considerably. Winold von Günwig took lodgings in the so-called ‘Witness-House’, a building requisitioned by the General Secretariat of the Tribunal in Novalis Street. He enjoyed American rations, ate grilled bacon and porridge for breakfast and was content. One day after another passed by. The days became weeks. Then the 17th of June arrived, a Monday.

It was eight o'clock in the morning. The sun was shining. The bars in the window cast long shadows on the stone floor of the cell. Friedrich 'Berger' stood at the door and waited for the guards to take him to the interview-room.

Today, at last, he could expect the beginning of the presentation of his own case. In all likelihood the case for Seyss-Inquart would not now take up more than the morning proceedings. As a precaution, therefore, Vesenstedt had requested one final discussion for that morning.

'Berger' cast a critical glance round the room. There was nothing that could be faulted. The blanket was pulled tight over the plank bed, the floor was swept, washing things, towel, books and writing materials arranged neatly on the table, the toilet in the niche beside the door was cleaned out, the tin wash-basin rinsed, the bowl and spoon put away on the shelf above the toilet, the waste-bucket emptied, the chair set at least four feet away from the outer wall as the regulations stipulated.

He thought over the last sessions of the court.

'Berger' regarded Seyss-Inquart as one of the most dangerous representatives of National Socialism. His intellect had enabled him to recognise the crimes as such. His passionate admiration for the National Socialist programme had caused him to conceal it. And his shrewdness was tailor-made to keep it hidden from the German people.

The more 'Berger' thought about Seyss-Inquart, the stronger grew the wish, just a few hours before the start of his own evidence to dispense with any kind of defence at all. For whatever he said in the witness-box, whatever attitude he adopted, the shame of it would overcome him.

Yet, as he had done every time in the past weeks when he was about to give up in despair, he suddenly saw his son Claudius before him. He wanted to make a stand for the future of his son.

The guards' footsteps echoed down the passage. The door was unlocked. Ten minutes later he sat behind the glass panel of the interview cubicle facing Vesenstedt.

His first question concerned his son's condition. Vesenstedt had been expecting this. 'Considering the circumstances, he's doing well,' he said briefly. 'I can't say more than that. I won't be able to go to Coburg until after the presentation of evidence.'

He hoped fervently that 'Berger' would not detect the lie in his eyes. It was out of the question to confront him with the

truth about his son now, before what was possibly the decisive part of the defence.

Vesenstedt had seen Claudius a few days earlier in the Coburg clinic, unmoving, with pale cheeks and staring eyes. Vesenstedt had talked to him about his mother, but had not mentioned his father. Nor had Claudius asked after him. It was only when Vesenstedt was about to close the door behind him that he burst out: 'Is my father still alive?' – 'Yes,' Vesenstedt had replied, and the boy had closed his eyes.

In the corridor, the doctor in charge of the case had taken Vesenstedt aside. 'We must expect that a large part of the cerebral nerves will remain damaged.'

'Does that mean that the boy . . . ?'

'Yes,' the doctor had said, 'it may well be that he will never fully recover.'

'Berger' tapped on the glass partition with his finger. Vesenstedt was jerked back into the present. 'I'm sorry,' he said, 'I was just going through the questions to Günwig once more. We should now decide on the final sequence in your evidence.'

Chapter Eleven

Before the beginning of the noon recess, the defence counsel for Seyss-Inquart had decided not to quote the remaining documents for his case, but had handed them over to the court as a whole. After the recess, therefore, the evidence presented for 'Berger's' defence could begin.

The seats for the press and observers were only moderately full. Even Jackson, who had been staying in the States for weeks, had not returned as announced. Dr. Stephen McNulty was to conduct the cross-examination for the United States prosecution instead.

The court entered the room, and those present rose. Lord Justice Lawrence bowed slightly to the prosecutors, to the defence, to the press-balcony and finally, as always, in the direction of the defendants.

In his familiar soft voice, he opened the afternoon session and immediately introduced the presentation of the case for the defence of 'Berger'. He and his colleagues on the bench agreed that the defendant 'Berger' should be given a more thorough, detailed hearing than any of the previous accused. 'Berger' was a key figure, not only as far as the economy was concerned, but above all in the question of the use of foreign workers in German armaments production.

Lawrence adjusted his chair, leaned forward, placed his elbows on the table and folded his hands together. His expression showing complete concentration.

Dr. Gebhard Vesenstedt had his documents in a pile beside him. He pulled the microphone towards him. 'Members of the Tribunal, Mr. President, I would like, before the presentation of my evidence, to make a statement. As you know, my client has retracted his plea of "not guilty" and taken upon himself his share of guilt in the crimes of the regime of the Third Reich as a member of that regime. This "shared guilt" derives from the general shared responsibility in consequence of his rank as a minister. It does not derive from specific individual crimes,

as he neither committed any such, nor did he aid and abet them. I ask you to take this into account when reaching your verdict.'

He took up the first document. 'I begin with the contention of the document number "B", stroke four, stroke three nine three. This concerns the German take-over of the "Red Star" ironworks near to Chernovitz.'

'Objection!' The representative of the Soviet prosecution stood up. 'This document is insignificant. I cannot imagine what new information it could possibly give us.'

Lawrence requested Vesenstedt to give his reason for producing this document.

Vesenstedt cleared his throat. He was not what one could call a 'quick starter', he knew that from his earliest days as a lawyer. He needed peace and above all time. If he was disturbed while building up his ideas, the result would be that only half their value would be realised.

Without so much as a glance across to the desk of the Soviet prosecution, he replied in a moderate tone: 'If the court please, this trial is now in the one-hundred-and-eighth day of proceedings. For one hundred and seven days, I have not entered decisively into the proceedings. The case for the defence of my client begins today. Part of this includes the reference to the documents approved by you. If I am not permitted even to mention these documents, but am forced to answer the objections of the prosecution before I have even been able to explain my reasoning, then I regard myself as seriously impeded in the presentation of my defence.'

Lawrence thought for a moment, and nodded: 'The counsel's objection is not sustained.'

Vesenstedt had won the first clash. At the end of his explanation of all the documents, he called 'Berger' as a witness in his own defence.

Flanked by two guards, he entered the witness-box. Lawrence asked him to repeat the oath, and allowed Vesenstedt to begin his questions.

Vesenstedt opened calmly. He knew that nothing could go wrong so long as 'Berger' kept to what they had discussed.

Vesenstedt: 'You held the rank of Minister, and between 1940 and 1944 you were Commissioner-General in the area of the economy and use of labour in the occupied regions of the east, that is, in the region of Poland and, after 1942, the occupied regions of the Soviet Union?'

'Berger', in an almost inaudible voice: 'Correct.'

After questions concerning his career, Vesenstedt came straight to the central point in the charges of the indictment.

'In your capacity as Commissioner-General did you also largely determine the standard of living of the previously named regions?'

'No. My responsibility was to keep the economy of these regions going, so far as it was militarily important for us, and, if possible, to raise production.'

'An increase in production could not, under those circumstances, be achieved by technical rationalisation, but only by increasing the quantity of people working?'

'Quite right.'

'Were the external requisites available? Housing, food supplies, sanitary arrangements?'

'No. There was a war on. We were not in a position to improve working conditions either in Germany or the areas we occupied.'

'Were you therefore forced to bring the workers together in labour camps which were in some cases unfit for human habitation?'

'Yes, where the housing had been destroyed by the effects of war, we had to set up camps. We tried to keep them fit for human habitation, but I cannot definitely assert that we always succeeded.'

'Did you yourself ever inspect such camps?'

'Yes, the camp at Bialystok for example.'

'Any other camps besides that?'

'Yes, another four or five others. But the camp at Bialystok was the largest, and to me it seemed the most inadequate in its provisions for the welfare of the inmates.'

'Can you remember your impressions of this camp?'

'Yes.' 'Berger' described the cramped conditions in the quarters, the insufficient food which, on the day of his visit, for example, consisted only of thin pea-soup; he told how there was only one sick-bay for 4000 camp inmates, and that the danger of epidemics had appeared.

'Did you remedy that?'

'However much I would have liked to have alleviated things there our resources were not great enough.'

Vesenstedt asked detailed questions about the number of camps, the percentage statistics, the death-rates, and then

turned the discussion to the subject of the concentration camps.

'Did your post also include authority over the economic and social situation in the concentration camps?'

'No. In economic and social matters the concentration camps were under the direct control of S.S.-*Obergruppenführer* Oswald Pohl, the head of the Central Economic and Administrative Section of the S.S.'

'Did you ever see one of these camps?'

'Yes. Maidanek Camp. But I was only shown the quarters in one barracks. It was particularly clean. I had no contact with camp inmates.'

'Why did you visit this camp? On your own initiative?'

'Yes. I wanted to get an idea of what it was like.'

The remaining part of the afternoon session was spent on unimportant questions from Vesenstedt on points of detail.

At five o'clock, Lawrence interrupted the examination. The court was adjourned until next day.

'Berger' sat lost in thought in his cell. He did not realise that the sentence 'I wanted to get an idea of what it was like', had been a fatal slip.

Next day Vesenstedt continued the examination. Towards midday he concluded it. All in all he was satisfied with the way things had gone. 'Berger' had stood up well so far. The cross-examination would be a far greater hurdle for him, however, and only when that was behind them would they be able to breathe again.

The cross-examination was opened after the midday recess by the American prosecutor McNulty. He was the hard-as-nails type of Irish-American, highly intelligent and lightning-fast in his reactions. Like Jackson, he held the post of Associate Justice in the Supreme Court in Washington.

McNulty went straight into the offensive. 'Witness, you stated that the economic situation of the concentration camps in the occupied regions of the east was outside your authority. Is that correct?'

'Berger' nodded. 'Yes.'

'Then why did you want to get an idea of what the concentration camps were like? Out of human concern perhaps?'

Suddenly 'Berger' knew what a mistake he had made the day

before. He saw that he had manoeuvred himself into a cul-de-sac. Now every single word would count. Feverishly he searched for the way to phrase his reply most favourably. He gazed straight ahead, his eyes riveted to the heavy, dark folding doors. 'No,' he said after a while, 'not out of concern. Out of interest.'

'And what circumstances, could you tell us, aroused this interest in you?'

'I learned from one of my assistants that apparently the conditions obtaining in the concentration camps were inhuman.' All at once he felt relieved. The burden of a bad conscience was suddenly lifted from him. He had admitted that he had been informed about the conditions in concentration camps. He shot a glance begging forgiveness in Vesenstedt's direction.

Vesenstedt lowered his head. The whole strategy of his case was destroyed. The prosecutor's intention was clear to him. An appearance by the witness Günwig could no longer be advocated at this point. He turned to Barbara, who was sitting behind him to one side, and gave her a sign to try and reach Günwig and tell him about McNulty's examination.

The statutes of the court forbade such steps. Vesenstedt knew that. Yet he felt responsible towards Günwig. It was only he who had persuaded him to give evidence here. At that moment only he knew what danger he would be exposing himself to by his appearance in the witness-box.

McNulty fixed 'Berger' with a piercing glance. 'And through your visit to Maidanek you were able to assure yourself that the conditions in concentration camps were humane?'

'What I was shown gave me that impression, yes.'

'And you wish to state that during your entire period as Commissioner-General you never knew anything about the crimes committed in concentration camps?'

'Yes, that's what I am saying.'

'Nothing about the killings in the concentration camps?'

'No, nothing.'

'Absolutely nothing about the crimes committed outside the concentration camps either? Nothing about the mass-executions of Jews?'

'Berger' remained silent. The blood was pounding in the veins of his temples. His hands, which he kept on his lap, were clasped together.'

'Will the witness please answer my question! Are you assert-

ing in all seriousness that in your high position you really knew nothing about the atrocities which were practised in the eastern regions of occupation, particularly against citizens of Jewish faith?’

‘Yes.’ He heard himself say it as though from far away. His lips were parched, his tongue heavy, and the muscles of his lower jaw would no longer obey his will.

‘Does that mean, yes, you knew nothing, or yes, you did know about it?’

‘Yes, I knew about it.’

McNulty paused to allow the words to gather their full impact.

The faces of the judges remained impenetrable. Lawrence leaned back for a moment. Without his betraying any sign of it, this development in the examination was a surprise to him also.

At the desks of the prosecution, of the stenographers and defence, everyone was paying careful attention. The representatives of the press whispered among themselves and took down notes.

For Vescenstedt this development in the cross-examination meant certain defeat. He admitted to himself that he had feared this turn of events. It was only his sheer indomitable optimism which had kept him hoping until the very last.

The words of his client ‘I wanted to get an idea of what it was like’, went through his head. He had perceived the danger as soon as the words passed his lips but had purposely neglected to draw ‘Berger’s’ attention to it. Now he saw he had acted wrongly and it was too late. The only thing he could perhaps do was to prevent his chief witness from being called.

Barbara came back into the room. He could read in her expression that she had not been successful.

McNulty’s harsh voice jerked him out of his thoughts.

‘So the witness knew about the crimes. Did you know about them since the time you were sent to the eastern occupied regions?’

‘No. Since the 2nd of February 1942, to be precise.’

‘Would you please explain the significance of this date?’

‘On that day I went to Dubno to carry out an inspection.’ ‘Berger’ recounted the incident near the little airfield in a deeply affected voice. When he had finished he wiped his eyes with the back of his hand.

‘What other experiences of a similar nature did you have?’

'None.'

'The events in Dubno therefore remained the only case in which you were able to discover evidence of the crimes of your government through your own personal observation?'

'Yes.'

'I have no further questions.'

The Soviet prosecutor Colonel Massov concerned himself exclusively with the theme of slave labour. His voice sounded deep and rumbling over the loudspeaker. 'Will the witness confirm that under his authority about 16 million workers from the eastern regions were forcibly sent to work in Germany?'

'Berger' was still suffering from the impact of his account of the incident at Dubno. He replied feebly. 'It is quite possible that this number is correct. Whether the workers were forcibly taken to Germany, I am unable to say. I, in any case . . .'

Massov interrupted him. 'Are you trying to claim that the Commissioner-General for the utilisation of labour had no knowledge of the way in which this utilisation was carried out?'

Lawrence intervened. 'Prosecutor, I believe it would be of benefit to all if you did not prevent the witness from making his reply. Please withdraw your question.'

Massov: 'I withdraw the question.'

Lawrence: 'Will the witness please continue.'

For a moment 'Berger' was confused. Then he repeated his last sentence and added: 'I, in any case, had nothing to do with the sending of workers from the eastern occupied territories to Germany. My responsibilities as Commissioner-General for the utilisation of labour only covered labour within the eastern territories.'

Anger showed in Massov's face. 'Let us now come to the utilisation of labour within these regions. You mentioned the labour camp near Bialystok, do you recall?'

'Yes, I recall.'

'You described to us how on the day of your inspection a particularly thin pea-soup was served, is that right?'

'I mentioned a thin pea-soup.'

'All right, a thin pea-soup, if you like. Were you not aware that in camps throughout the world, whenever there is an inspection, the kitchens produce especially good food in order to impress the inspector?'

'Yes, I was aware of that.'

'Would you therefore not have to say that on normal days the rations would be far worse than just thin pea-soup; for example instead of soup, only water and rock-hard dry bread?'

'I did not know if there was only bread and water. And if I had known I would not have been in a position to do anything about it, as I did not have the means.'

'Would you not have been in a position to change the working conditions, for example by decreasing the number of workers?'

'No, I was not in a position to do that.'

'No? Was it not you and your department that herded people all over Poland and the U.S.S.R. into Bialystok?'

Lawrence cleared his throat. 'Would the prosecutor not agree that it might perhaps be better to substitute the word "gathered" for "herded"?'

Massov: 'All right, I substitute the word "gathered" for "herded".'

Lawrence: 'Thank you. Will the witness now please answer the prosecution's question?'

'Berger' considered for a moment and said: 'Yes, it is true that I was responsible for gathering these people together.'

Massov raised his finger threateningly. 'So you did determine the number of workers?'

'If you like, yes. But it was Berlin . . .'

Massov: 'I have no further questions.'

Lawrence: 'Prosecutor, did we not make it our practice not to interrupt the answer of a witness?'

Massov, his cheek muscles tense: 'I am very sorry.'

Lawrence: 'Thank you. Will the witness please conclude his answer?'

'Berger' looked up. His voice was quiet. 'I have nothing further to say.'

The duel of words between McNulty and Winold von Günwig lasted barely ten minutes.

When Vesenstedt was requested by the court to call his only witness, he had declined. Then McNulty stepped in. 'Mr. President, the withdrawal of the witness hampers the case for the prosecution. I ask the witness to be called even if the counsel for the defence intends not to put any questions to him.'

Even before Lawrence could make any reply, Vesenstedt asked to speak. Lawrence smiled 'Certainly, Counsel.'

'Your Honour, so far as I know the defence has had no opportunity to examine a witness for the prosecution whose appearance to testify was withdrawn for any reason whatever, against the wishes of the prosecution.'

McNulty hastened to protest. 'I do not know of any witness which the prosecution withdrew. Besides which, the lateness of the withdrawal permits the possible conclusion that the witness is to be withheld from the prosecution.'

Lawrence leaned towards the microphone to give his voice the necessary emphasis. 'Gentlemen! We wish neither to impute any suspicion to the prosecution, nor suggest anything to the detriment of the defence. We wish to attempt to clarify the matter in accordance with the statutes of the Tribunal. We are now in the stage of the presentation of the case for the defence. The defence can choose its own witnesses here – without any influence from the gentlemen of the prosecution, you will note. Nevertheless, I would ask the counsel to give me the reasons why he declines to call his witness at, as it were, the last moment.'

Although Vesenstedt knew very well that he could hardly give an answer that would be acceptable to the court, he tried to save as much as could be saved. 'Mr. President, do the statutes of the Tribunal not state quite distinctly that the presentation of evidence by the counsel for the defence is exclusively the concern of the defence, in the selecting, calling and questioning its witnesses?'

'That is so, Counsel. What disturbs me in your case is firstly the late point in time, and secondly that this is your only witness. I therefore ask you to explain the reason to me.'

'Am I to understand that the reason for my withdrawal could possibly overrule the statutes on this point?'

'In order to shorten this issue,' said Lawrence, without showing the slightest impatience, 'I would like to put it this way: if the reason should give cause to see in it a possible concealment of the truth, then I must obviously do all I can to assist in the establishment of truth.'

'Thank you, Mr. President. The reason for my withdrawal was nothing more than the realisation that the witness was no longer necessary, and for the purpose of saving the court time.'

'Counsel!' Though it was scarcely noticeable, it was one of the few moments in the entire trial when Sir Geoffrey Lawrence

raised his voice. 'Will you please explain your reason more fully.'

'I am very sorry, Mr. President, I do not feel capable of doing so.'

'Then I am just as sorry, Counsel, that I feel compelled to place the establishment of the truth above the petty disputation of the statutes. The witness is to be admitted for questioning by the gentlemen of the prosecution.'

Winold von Günwig was led to the witness-box by a guard and sworn in.

Without any preamble, McNulty went straight for his mark. 'Witness, you lastly held the position of ministerial director and were the personal assistant of the defendant?'

'Correct.'

'Could one say that in this position you were also his closest confidant?'

'Objection!' Vesenstedt sprang to his feet.

Lawrence remained perfectly calm. 'Counsel, we should like to have the flow of the cross-examination disturbed as little as the flow of your own examination.' And then to McNulty: 'Will the prosecutor agree that it is perhaps more appropriate not to give the impression that the witness and the defendant were close friends, that is, if they were not?'

McNulty nodded slightly towards Lawrence. 'I will repeat my question. Could you say that as the personal assistant of the defendant, you were also the party through whom confidential reports reached him?'

'Yes, you could say that.' Everyone in the room could see that Günwig felt extremely ill at ease.

'Could it also be said that in your position on his staff you were the only party through whom confidential reports reached him?'

'Yes.' Günwig choked over the words.

'To change the subject now,' said McNulty casually, 'would you agree with me that one could describe reports, or shall we say information, about concentration camps as confidential?'

'Counsel,' Lawrence pushed the spectacles on his nose back into place, 'let us be accurate – you are *not* changing the subject. Am I right?'

'Yes, Your Honour. I repeat the question.' And then to the witness: 'Would you agree with me that one could describe

reports or information about concentration camps as confidential?’

Günwig swallowed. ‘Yes, I agree with you.’

‘Perhaps even as particularly confidential?’

‘Yes.’

‘So therefore it could only have been you who reported to the defendant on the Maidanek Concentration Camp. Is that correct?’

Günwig made no reply. He was thinking hard.

For a few seconds there was a deathly hush in the room. Even the murmuring in the interpreters’ cubicles fell silent.

‘I asked you whether it was you who told the accused . . .’

‘. . . yes, it was me.’ Günwig lowered his eyes. The words were scarcely audible as he uttered them.

McNulty made one of his famous pauses. ‘So you had some idea of what conditions were like in the concentration camp?’

‘Yes.’ Günwig stared straight ahead.

‘And since the defendant decided to visit the camp on the basis of your information, so far as you knew, these conditions could hardly have been humane?’

‘Yes.’

‘So you drew the defendant’s attention to these inhumane conditions?’

‘Yes.’

‘Could one say that these conditions were so horrifying to you that you felt it necessary to tell the defendant about them?’

‘Yes.’

‘Is it correct that you would not have passed on such delicate information to your superior if this information had not come from an absolutely reliable source?’

‘Yes.’

‘Did you speak about this to the defendant after his visit to Maidanek as well?’

‘Yes.’

‘And did the defendant say that he had seen no cause for complaint in Maidanek?’

‘Yes.’

‘Is it correct that your reliable source of information was sufficient reason for you to, shall we say, doubt the accuracy of your superior’s statement?’

‘Yes.’

‘And afterwards did you not pass on your knowledge of the

actual conditions in Maidanek to anyone else or take any other positive steps in response to this knowledge?

'No.'

'So you neither made an official report, nor left your post, nor informed the public, nor even made a memorandum? You did not do any of these things?'

'No.'

'To my knowledge you entered this room as a free man?'

'Yes.'

McNulty turned to the court. 'Your Honour, I request an order for the arrest of the witness . . . ' He read the name from his notes. ' . . . an order for the arrest of the witness Winold von Günwig as an accessory, and for indirectly contributing to crimes against humanity. I have no further questions.' He picked up his documents and went back to his desk.

Lawrence held up the proceedings for a few minutes and conferred with his colleagues on the bench. When he resumed the proceedings again, he announced the arrest of Winold von Günwig.

Vesenstedt raised no objection. He knew he would not be able to achieve anything by it. He concluded his case. He was down-cast and felt he had been the loser all down the line.

Clinton Keen had little time to spare for Karin at the moment. Billsteiner had reported a recent appearance of the man they had known by the name of Schmitt in his previous lodgings in Schlossäcker Street. Working together with the military authorities, Clinton set a large-scale search in progress.

Karin Ruland had finally missed the moment when she could have spoken to Clinton about Ralf Schilling and Gisela Silinski. Clinton had let her know that he loved her more and more each day. She did not want to put this love at risk. Apart from the fact that Schilling's visit now lay in the past and no longer seemed worth mentioning, she had made up her mind not to draw any connection between it and her brother's death.

Ulrich Lainz had gone over his plan of action one last time in his head. He wanted to keep the risk as small as possible. For this reason he had instructed Gisela Silinski to get fresh, and this time even more precise, information concerning the equipment and strength of the security troops.

She surprised him with the news that the unit was to be largely disbanded. On the basis of this intelligence, he put off

the operation until a later date. His idea was that a young, newly assembled unit is always a less dangerous opponent than one which has been welded together over a long period.

But since there was still no sign of the expected regrouping of the unit, he got in touch with Hemmersbach in Frankfurt.

It was the 4th of July. The day on which the pleading of the defence began.

Just after nine o'clock there was a knock on Gisela's door. She was alone and still in bed. She threw Bob's bathing wrap, which was much too large for her, over her shoulders, and opened up. The owner of the house handed her a city telegram.

She closed the door behind her. Her heart was leaping right into her throat. She tore open the telegram with trembling fingers. And even though she knew what to expect, her breath was still taken away by the one word 'sunrise'.

Book Three

THE PLEAS

Chapter Twelve

The town of Kaaden had about 7000 inhabitants. It lay in the western part of Czechoslovakia, in the Sudetenland, on the River Eger about 35 miles from Karlsbad. Its importance to the surrounding area depended on the fact that it had a grammar school, an agricultural secondary school with matriculation and a domestic science school. In addition there were a large number of suppliers and out-workers for the famous Karlsbad glove industry based there.

Käthe Tanner also supplemented her husband's earnings as an engine-driver by out-work. Since she was just a girl, she had specialised in sewing in the ready-made thumbs of gloves.

In the late summer of 1919, however, she was forced to do without these extra earnings for two weeks. She gave birth to a son on August 31st. He was given the name of Paul.

He grew up into a strong boy. When he went to elementary school, he was not one of the biggest in his class, but he was physically stronger than any of them. When it came to trials of courage, there was no one of his age who could compete with him. He performed the most elaborate dives from the Monastery Cliff above the swimming school down into the whirlpools of the Eger, he climbed the highest trees and he rode his bicycle with no hands faster than the others across the bumpy cobblestones of the market-place from the hardware dealer to the church.

Like most of his friends he joined the athletic youth club when he was twelve. Proudly he wore the uniform of black shorts, grey shirt, black tie and white knee-socks. That the athletes regarded themselves as a nationalist cell aligned against their Czech compatriots never occurred to him as a boy.

When he was fourteen years old he went to the agricultural secondary school. The adults talked with shining eyes about the political changes in neighbouring Germany, and spoke the name of Hitler with enthusiasm.

At the age of eighteen Paul was transferred to the 'young

men'. With growing interest, he followed the progress of the political situation in the Sudetenland as it came to a head. Rumours were flying everywhere. They told of repression of the German-speaking population, of violence perpetrated by the Czechs, of plunder, even of murders.

On the 29th of September of the following year, Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy signed the 'Munich Agreement'. It granted the German-speaking border areas of Bohemia to Germany, which then became the 'Sudetengau'.

On the 2nd of October German troops marched into Kaaden. The joy of the population was indescribable. All across the market-place the chants of 'We thank our Führer!' rang out and echoed from the arcades.

Paul had passed his matriculation. He wanted to do his practical work in the next two years. Barely six months after the 'union' with Germany, however, the plans for his profession were cut short. He received the papers for his call-up to the Germany Army on the 1st of April 1939. His nationalist enthusiasm was considerably dampened.

On the outskirts of Leipzig in A.A. Battalion 1/23 he learned how to operate anti-aircraft guns. War broke out in autumn. In spring 1940 he was given a routine promotion to lance-corporal. After another year he was made a corporal.

In March 1941 the 1/23 travelled across the Balkans and after the spectacular landing of paratroops on Crete they were sent to the island as one of the first units in the south-eastern air defences.

Paul basked in the Greek sunshine. In spite of being better off than the soldiers on the eastern front he was unhappy. The army and the war did not agree with him. He longed for Kaaden and the life he had led before.

He regarded the transfer to non-commissioned officer training at the anti-aircraft battery school in Stolp as a welcome 'home leave'.

In October 1943 he arrived back in Crete just in time for the preparations for withdrawal. At the beginning of 1944 his unit was one of the first to be pulled back to the mainland, and was immediately involved in battles with partisans, suffering heavy losses. Their orders were to move through Greece and South Bulgaria to the oilfields round Ploesti in order to defend them against the threatened attack of the Russian South Army.

The 88 m.m. anti-aircraft guns were used exclusively to hold

off the Russian armoured thrusts. Paul was now a non-commissioned officer and a gun-layer.

On the 11th of March 1944 Paul thought his last hour had come. Two T34s were rolling relentlessly towards his gun. An act of desperation turned him into a hero. At point-blank range he shot both tanks into flames. He was shot through the shoulder. They sent him to a field-hospital near Orgeiev, promoted him to the rank of sergeant and awarded him the Iron Cross, 2nd class.

He was sent back from Orgeiev to Javorov. His unit was reduced to just a few men.

He was just on the road to recovery, wearing only a light bandage, when a major from the army appeared with an officer of the Nazi leadership and made up a draft of semi-invalid and slightly-wounded men to be sent to the nearby front. Paul was among them.

Realising that this was an expendable troop he made up his mind to save his life. Before the lorries drove off, he fled from the hospital.

He did not get far. Near Jarostov he was caught by the 'watch-dogs', a patrol of the Waffen-S.S. A court-martial under an S.S.-*Hauptsturmführer* sentenced him to death. As he laconically read out the sentence to him, Paul wanted to cry out and spring at his throat. Yet all he could do was fix the man's face in his memory for all time.

Three S.S.-men overpowered him and locked him in a chicken coop. The walls of the coop were rotten.

That was his salvation. Before they could take him away to be executed half an hour later, he had escaped again. This time he took a different direction, seeing that he had no chance of reaching home and that the field police would only catch him again. This consideration, and the knowledge of the way the front was moving gave him the idea for a plan. He would allow himself to be caught up with the retreating troops and give himself up to the pursuing Russian army.

Before his capture, he destroyed his pay-book so as not to be subject to especially harsh measures as a Sudeten German, and so he could later give his home as Vienna.

Passing through many places, he was sent to a prisoner-of-war camp in Central Russia. Barbed wire enclosed a large field, and Soviet sentries only guarded a few places which could not

be easily observed. But escaping was out of the question anyway. Where could he go?

The prisoners built themselves barracks and wooden bunks, made themselves springy mattresses out of thin twigs to sleep on, and carved themselves spoons and bowls.

The Russians divided them up into labour brigades and made them rebuild the destroyed houses and streets. They received rations according to the amount of work they did. A man who was strong enough to do a large amount was given extra food which was withheld from the physically weak. For weeks there was only potatoes and cabbage, no fat, and the bread had often gone mouldy because of its high water-content.

One day they heard from the guards that the war was over. Yet they were too weak to be able to give vent to their joy.

Week by week the rations grew less. The Russians scarcely knew where to secure the food for their own cities. There was almost nothing left over for the German prisoners-of-war.

The camp graveyard grew larger and larger. Hunger drove the prisoners to serve as stool-pigeons among their own men for the Soviets. They denounced anyone who got himself food, who by whatever means ate better than the rest. Sentences of up to 25 years in a labour-camp were intended to act as a deterrent.

In August 1945 a Soviet political major visited the camp. He was looking for communist and communist-sympathising prisoners. They were made trustees, and received preferential treatment.

The others had the chance of following the Free Germany National Committee. There were better rations for that too. Word quickly got around that only anti-fascists had any prospect of seeing Germany again.

Paul saw his chance. He had himself sent to the 'Anti-Fascist School of Krasnigorsk'. There he was given communist and anti-capitalist instruction. He remembered Kaaden, his parents, his earlier life of freedom. He accepted the instruction in the knowledge that it could not touch him within and served only to make him one of the first to be released from captivity.

On the 2nd of March 1946, the day came. The group to be sent back to Austria was gathered together. Paul was in it. The journey in goods-wagons led across the endless expanses of Russia. In Brest-Litovsk they were transferred to German goods-wagons. They felt they were free.

In Vienna he learned that the Sudeten Germans had been

driven from their homeland. The major proportion of them had naturally streamed into Bavaria. Paul made his way as far as Passau, got in touch with his fellow countrymen, and heard that a reception camp had been set up at Hof. In Hof his hopes were raised of finding people from Kaaden near Wurzburg. But his enquiries in Wurzburg were in vain.

All at once he realised he was homeless. He remembered a girl from Nuremberg he had got to know in Leipzig in 1939.

Next day, he met Barbara Vesenstedt. After he had accompanied her to her door, he went on to Röntgen Street but found that the girl from Leipzig had vanished. All that was left of the house in which she had lived were the foundations.

Paul decided to stay in Nuremberg for a few days to rest. He lived by black-market dealings, and slept in the former deep shelter by the Königstor. Each time he descended the steep spiral staircase two floors below ground, he felt as though he was going aboard a submarine.

The people who slept down there, cooked, or just waited, did not know one another but their common fate bound them together. There were 'house rules': they all knew that at ten o'clock in the evening the electric lights, which were dim in any case, went out, and only the emergency lamps stayed on. Everyone realised that the most precious thing they shared down there was air. Smoking was forbidden. They could only get hot water at eight o'clock in the morning and seven in the evening.

There were hours in which Paul thought he was back in the inner loneliness of captivity in Russia. He spent most of his time during these days at the missing persons bureau of the Red Cross. But in vain. He could discover nothing about what had become of his parents.

On the day when he had made up his mind to leave Nuremberg and move on at random to some other place, he saw Barbara Vesenstedt crossing the Plärrer.

They had made a date to meet the next evening, Paul having put off his plans for leaving. Theirs was not the usual kind of relationship. They were drawn to one another because they enjoyed talking about their homes, the war, about Paul's time as a prisoner, and the preparations which Barbara and her father had to make for the defence of 'Berger'. And again and again they would discuss the trial.

'That's just quibbling!' He leaned over towards her and put

his hand on hers. 'Barbara, one thing you can believe about me. I was definitely not a Nazi. It's true I did grow up in a similar group, the Young Men's Sports Association, but I always kept a cool head. And that has helped me through every time up till now. That was how I made it through the army, it helped me get by when I was a prisoner and that's how I got myself sent to the anti-fascist school. If it hadn't been for that, I wouldn't be sitting here with you now.'

'All that may be true, Paul . . .'

'Let me finish.' He smiled at her gently. 'What I mean is that it's wrong to try to oppose the Nazis with legalistic hair-splitting. What difference does any of that make to the whole catastrophe . . . ?' He snapped his fingers. ' . . . does all that do anything to change the fact that every last one of these Nazi bosses belongs on the gallows, that the court has got nothing to do with justice, but is just a farce, that the Russians should be up there in the dock too, that the Allies think that they are the only decent human beings, that . . . ?' He made a dismissive gesture. 'It's all rubbish! In the present situation all you can do is look after yourself. Do you understand, Barbara, just yourself!'

She had not interrupted him. She knew that it was no longer just the trial he was talking about, but that he was also putting up a defence, though a weak one, for himself.

'Your ideas are rather confused . . .'

'Don't you agree with me?'

'No. Because your thinking is a consequence of the Nazi period.'

'That's a hard accusation. Would the learned legal lady please give me a clear, comprehensible explanation?'

'We didn't believe in justice even where a trivial motoring offence was concerned. Even if no one admitted it. Everything was measured by the yardstick of party ideology. Every accusation, every charge could be looked at through the spectacles of the party and accordingly magnified or, if the party considered it necessary, diminished to an incomprehensible dismissal.'

'In every dictatorship, it's the ruling party which dictates.'

'Except now we have to take issue with this kind of thinking.'

'I'm really eager to see what you're getting at.'

'What I'm getting at is that anyone who could keep a cool head . . . ' She took her hand away from him and smiled at him

soothingly, ' . . . that these people came to the conclusion that only by looking after oneself could one get any justice!'

'You're not trying to say that anyone could get justice for himself under the Nazis?'

'Of course I'm not. I was just talking about the attitude of mind. And this attitude of mind has clearly got a firm grip on you. During the Nazi period – and possibly during the preceding years as well – you lost your belief in a proper jurisdiction.'

'Didn't you?'

'Yes, I did too. But I'm not closing my mind to the new way of thinking, which we've now – laboriously – got to get used to. I know it sounds strange, but it really only took twelve years to affect the deepest roots of an entire nation's feelings. I take this trial here in Nuremberg as a sort of lesson in human rights.'

'What rights do these defendants have?'

'All rights, Paul. All the rights which they never allowed the people they once accused. Did you ever hear anything about the "people's court"?'

'No. You forget that as soldiers and in captivity we weren't too well up on things.'

'The people's court of the Nazis was the complete opposite of this court. In the people's court, the defendants were robbed of all their rights. They weren't even allowed to present a defence. They were just hauled up, shouted down by the judge, and the sentences were decided without any adequate due process. Nazi jurisdiction had nothing whatsoever to do with justice.'

'That may be true, Barbara. But are you in all seriousness convinced that the defendants here in Nuremberg have got a better chance than the accused before a people's court?'

'If they are as innocent as many were in the people's court, then quite definitely. It's absolutely beyond question.'

'All right, you've convinced me. But just put yourself in my position.' He told her about the bullet-wound through his shoulder, the setting up of a unit in which, as a semi-invalid, he would have been sent to a certain death, about his escape and his sentencing by a court-martial. 'Do you know what that is, a summary court-martial?'

'No one ever told me.'

'An officer and two officials make you stand to attention and inform you in a few short words that you've forfeited your life. They don't ask you anything, they don't listen to you. Another

official has the role of your so-called defending counsel. He just takes note of the verdict. My court-martial seems about the same as your people's court. Just imagine you were condemned to death like an animal by the people's court like that. You were able to escape and survive till the present. Would you just wait until a properly constituted court, call it democratic if you like, got hold of your former executioner and sentenced him to maybe one year's loss of freedom? Or would you be like me, and say to yourself, as soon as I catch him, I'll carry out the sentence myself? Do you understand what I'm saying?

She took her time in answering. 'Yes, Paul, I can understand you.' She lowered her voice 'But is revenge the only way out?'

'Revenge? I'm talking about justice. About the highest, most unassailable justice. A man who treats another's life in that merciless way forfeits his own life!'

'You're entitled to talk that way, after everything you've gone through. But you should also consider whether we as human beings have the right to equate justice and retribution. I mean, now that I know you to be a thinking person. Just ask yourself, Paul: what is justice?'

'The thought of this justice, the thought of that bastard of an S S -officer whom I'm going to strangle with these hands,' he held them out towards her, 'the moment I meet him - these thoughts have given me the strength to withstand imprisonment and carry on living. And now you come along and try to prove to me with your lawyer's logic that I starved through all that time for nothing at all, that I endured all the torture and humiliation in vain. No Barbara, you mustn't do that. You have no right!'

'Not with the logic of the lawyer, Paul,' she said in a conciliating tone, 'with the morality of sound human understanding. So-called justice, as you see it, is derived from a fundamental human passion. But laws . . .'

' . . . are also only made by men.'

'Yes. But their basis is the intellect, and not the emotions.'

'We won't get anywhere like that. You must admit, the intellect cannot be measured.'

'But it's more detached from a particular event than the emotions are.'

They continued their discussion until the approaching curfew parted them. Paul took Barbara back to her door and then

walked through the semi-darkness of the streets and the Allersberg Tunnel to the deep shelter at the Königstor.

He went down the steep spiral staircase, found his corner quietly so as not to disturb those who were already sleeping, and lay down on his bed. Yet although he told himself how happy he was to have found someone like Barbara, he fell asleep with the thought of S.S.-*Hauptsturmführer*. A few moments later he strangled the man with his bare hands.

Chapter Thirteen

Gisela Silinski did not know how long she stood with her back against the door. She held the telegram in her hand. She was still staring at the word 'sunrise'.

Her first clear thought was: *Bob!* She must make sure that Bob did not come there as he did every other evening. She had to get the truck from Lainz and arrange everything for tomorrow.

She snapped out of her paralysis. Her watch said 9.25. If she was to reach Bob before the beginning of the afternoon session, she would have to hurry. It would be the last time she would see him.

A little before ten o'clock she ran from the tram-stop to the entrance of the law-courts. The rain was streaming down. In the door to the exit for the press, she bumped into Raoul Clairon.

'Now I call that a pleasant way to begin the day.' He tried to press himself against her, but she slipped out of his grasp.

'It's time we saw one another again. This evening, for example.' Against her will, he took her arm. 'This evening then. I'll pick you up about seven.'

'No. I can't.' She freed her arm and went up the stairs.

He went up with her. 'This evening!'

'I said no!'

'But I want you to say yes.'

'I don't see why I should.'

'Oh, you know exactly why. This evening then!'

'No. Not today, nor . . .'

'Oh?' He stopped on the landing and gripped her arm firmly. 'No one talks to me like that! Not to me! I'll be at your place at seven.'

'I won't be there.' How stupid, she thought. Why do I have to run across him, today of all days?

'If you're not there at seven, then . . .'

 She could hear the threat in his tone but it meant nothing to her.

She did not even look at him, turned on her heel and went back down the steps again to the exit. She had no wish to run into Bob in Clairon's company. Upstairs the doors were closed and the hum of voices fell quiet. The morning session was beginning.

Gisela went up once more. The vestibule before the press balcony was empty. Clairon had already taken his seat in the court-room. He was wondering how he could pay back Gisela for giving him the brush-off. One row behind him sat a man who was only in Nuremberg for today, as an observer of the trial. His hooked nose could not be missed. Clairon had met him yesterday evening. He turned round briefly to say hello.

Gisela stood for a long time beside the window, staring out at the rain. She was thinking about Bob.

She turned her head and went rigid with horror. Bob was coming down the corridor from the stairs at the beginning of the east central building.

He noticed her and came up to her with a warm laugh. 'Hello, darling! How nice to see you . . .'

'I was looking for you.'

'Looking for me? It couldn't be better. Come on.' He placed his hand on her shoulder and guided her into the corner next to the stone drinking fountain. 'I've got some really great news for you.'

'Something good?' She did not know what he was talking about, but she thought her legs would collapse under her. She clutched instinctively at the window-ledge.

'Don't you feel well?'

'No, no, it's nothing.'

'But you look pale.'

'It's nothing, believe me.'

He turned his head to make sure that no one was watching them. Then he half bent down to her and spoke to her excitedly but quietly.

'I told you I wrote to my parents about you, didn't I? It's a while back now. I didn't show you their reply. Do you want to know why?' He could not control his eagerness to tell her everything. When she did not answer his question, he went on. 'Because they warned me off you, that's why. That was wrong of me, I know. But I made up for it, darling, just a few days later. I wrote to them again. This time I told them all about you. I described you right down to the last detail. Ten pages long.'

With two photos. One of you in front of the wardrobe, you remember? And the other one of you standing at the front door. Darling, what's the matter? Are you sad? Because I never said anything to you about their first letter? It'll never happen again. Everything's all right now! Today I got the reply to my ten-page epic. And do you know what the reply was? You can't guess? I'm supposed to rush down and wrap you up in a package and send you to them! As soon as I'm discharged from here, I'm to take you by the hand and bring you back to Texarkana. They not only want to get to know you, they want you to stay over there. Their letter is just one plain warm invitation to you. Darling, did I ever really ask you if you like me? If you – as soon as the regulations are eased – if you'd like to be my wife?

She looked at him in astonishment. Her head spun. Her blood seemed to curdle in her veins. She could only hear him repeating over and over again, 'Would you like to be my wife? Would you like to be my wife?'

'I always wanted to ask you. It's just that I never dared. I was afraid you might say "no". Yes, that's how dumb I was. Really dumb! The letter did give me the courage to ask, I admit that. But I would have married you anyhow. I love you more than anything else in the whole world. We would have gotten married even if it had to be in the middle of the Australian bush or for all I care in the frozen Arctic. The only difference that the letter makes is that now we can marry in Texarkana. Am I talking too much? You must tell me if I'm talking too much, darling, but right now I can't help myself. I've just got to let it all out, please forgive me. Tell me you forgive me, please.'

'Yes, Bob, I forgive you.' She was surprised that she was capable of getting even five words out. The roof of her mouth felt numb. Please God, she thought, bring this conversation to an end!

He was about to stroke his hand over her hair, but stopped short. The doors to the court-room opened. It was the midday recess. Bob explained to Gisela that he had to take care of his men now, and then added quickly: 'Please say we can celebrate our engagement today, all right?'

'It's not possible,' she said hurriedly, her voice shaking, 'I haven't time this evening. My father's associate has got in touch with me again.'

He could not conceal how upset he was. There was still so much he wanted to say, and yet he could not stay with her another second in case their intimacy was noticed. He shrugged his shoulders regretfully, and just at the very moment he was about to turn away from her, a man walked up to them and with an expression of the utmost delight, called out to Gisela: 'Madame Bernsdorff! What are you doing here in Nuremberg?'

Gisela went ashen white. A few steps away, Raoul Clairon observed the scene.

The stranger was thick-set, wore the uniform of the French army, and his face had a prominent hooked nose. 'Don't you remember me then?'

'No,' she said, and Bob could see that she was embarrassed.

'But Madame Bernsdorff,' said the man, 'I am Commissaire Rebrière! Saarbrücken!'

Before he could say anything further, she mumbled an 'Excuse me,' hurried down the corridor, and disappeared into the toilets. She was at the limit of her endurance.

She turned on the tap and cooled the back of her neck. It did her good. After a while she could think clearly again. She made up her mind she would give Bob an explanation for what had happened. If she did not, his confusion over Rebrière might compel him to come to see her that evening. She had to prevent that, come what may.

She waited until the recess was over. Bob was walking up and down in the corridor. Once again they were alone.

'Forgive me, darling, I didn't want to speak to that man.' She spoke quietly.

'So I noticed.' He smiled uneasily.

'I find the man revolting. Memories of my darkest days are bound up with him. Didn't I ever tell you about Saarbrücken?'

'No. At least, I don't remember if you did.'

'In Saarbrücken I was arrested by the French for 24 hours because I hadn't got my identity card on me. That Rebrière interrogated me, and in the most horrible way. He was less interested in my papers than in spending a night with me. To avoid any chance of him pursuing me, I decided to give a false name. Can you understand that?'

He checked to see that no one was watching them, and squeezed her hand discreetly. 'Yes, darling, I can understand that.' And to reassure her, he added: 'I don't like the look of the guy either.'

She looked at him gratefully. 'Thank you.'

'What about tonight?'

'Please don't be hard on me. This talk with my father's associate is important to me, you know that.'

'Okay. But does it have to be just this evening? I mean, since today is our day?'

'There's nothing I can do about it, believe me, darling. It just isn't possible this evening. However much it upsets me.'

'Does it upset you, then?' His expression lightened.

'Yes.' She lowered her eyes. 'Yes, it does upset me.'

'You're crying!'

'I'm not crying.' The tears ran down her cheeks.

'What's the matter? Please tell me what I can do . . .'

'It's nothing. Nothing really, believe me.'

'But perhaps I can help you?'

'No. You can't help me. And you don't have to either.'

'But . . .'

'Can't a woman get tearful for no reason? I think she can.'

'For no reason? I can't believe that.'

She could scarcely breathe. She did not think she could hold on much longer before passing out.

'Please tell me we'll never ever part!'

'But Bob, not here.'

'I want to know right now. Please! Repeat after me: I want . . .' He lifted up her chin. 'Please, darling, it's important to me. Repeat after me: I want . . .'

'I want . . .'

'... us to never ever part.'

'... us to never ever part.'

'... no matter what happens.'

'... no matter what . . . please, Bob!'

'You're crying again.'

'I've got to say goodbye now.'

'Goodbye? Now? I don't understand.'

'I must lie down for a while.'

'Don't you feel well?'

'No. Please don't ask anything more. It's really nothing.'

'When are we going to see one another again?'

'When?'

'Yes, when. I mean, you'll be back by curfew at the latest won't you?'

The curfew! She had not thought of that.

'No,' she lied quickly, 'I'm not meeting the man here in Nuremberg, you see.'

'Where then?'

'He's going to pick me up. He lives somewhere further out. I've forgotten where.'

'Then not until tomorrow?'

She swallowed. 'Not until tomorrow.'

'Okay. Can I still say that in spite of that, this is the happiest day of my life? Can I say that?'

'Yes, you can say that. Well then . . . ' This was the final farewell. She was prepared for it. Times without number, she had pictured it in her mind, and thought out the words she would say to Bob.

Now that the moment had come, she could not remember them.

She looked all round. The corridor was just as empty as before. With a swift movement, she gave him a brief kiss on the cheek.

Before he could respond, she turned away from him and walked slowly towards the stairs. She felt as though she were going step by step into a threatening, unfathomable darkness.

She reached the stairs. Her heart was pounding. All her nerves seemed stripped bare. Thoughts were burning through her mind: Go back! Stay with him! Save your life! But she went on, step by step, towards the exit.

At the beginning of the midday recess, Raoul Clairon immediately went to talk to Rebrière.

During the second half of the session his thoughts had been devoted exclusively to Gisela. He had seen exactly how Rebrière had approached her like an old acquaintance, how she had turned away from him, gone chalk-white, and finally fled into the toilet.

Rebrière had not yet reached the landing of the dining-rooms, which were one floor lower down, when Clairon was beside him.

'Well, well, Monsieur le Commissaire!'

'Monsieur Clairon?'

'Congratulations, you remembered my name!'

'Oh, my memory is my stock-in-trade.'

'And it even works after a rather late evening. How late was it actually?'

'It always works. I believe it was at least two o'clock. But the

wine was good, and what more could one ask for?"

"Didn't you say this was the first time you've been here with us?"

"Let me return your compliment. This is the first, and in all probability the last, time I've been here."

"As an observer?"

"As an observer for Saarbrücken, so to speak. In matters of this kind it's always me who gets chosen. I'm quite used to it."

They had arrived in front of the dining-room. Clairon made a gesture and let Rebrière go in first.

He guided Rebrière through the room towards a table standing apart from the others. "My regular table." After a glass of grapefruit juice, Clairon introduced the subject of the incident with Gisela.

Rebrière became thoughtful. "A strange person. She was afraid of me! Perhaps she assumed that I was here on her account."

"On her account? Privately?"

"No, not what you think!" Rebrière laughed. "To arrest her, of course." In a few words, he explained the situation to Clairon.

"And you don't know," asked Clairon, "if Bernsdorff is her real name?"

"No. She had no identity card when she came to me. All I know is that she ran off. And that just now she got quite a fright. But that's understandable."

Clairon was no longer listening. He had an idea: his secretary! He ended the conversation with a few polite phrases, took his leave saying that there was someone else he had to talk to, and left the room to look for Karin Ruland.

She was standing in the corridor by one of the windows, holding a lighted cigarette in her hand.

He asked with apparent casualness after her friend Gisela.

"Gisela? What's the matter with her?"

If he was not mistaken, there was a slight wavering in her glance.

"Nothing's the matter with her," he said. "I just spoke to her again a little while ago, and she told me you had known one another for a long time. For more than a year. Is that right?"

She nodded.

"From the six-day races in Berlin, right?"

"Yes, why?"

"And she used to be called "Bernsdorff", right?"

'Bernsdorff?'

'Yes, Bernsdorff. When you first met, she said, she was still called Bernsdorff. Don't you remember?'

'Oh yes, of course. It had just slipped my mind.'

'So she was called Bernsdorff?'

'Yes.' Karin stubbed out her cigarette. 'Will you excuse me? I have to go and wash my hands.'

He forgot about the afternoon session and drove over to see Clinton.

Joe Stevens was busy checking through documents when Clairon burst into the building. 'Isn't Keen here?'

Joe did not allow himself to be disturbed.

'He's off somewhere.'

'And where, may I ask?' Clairon spoke with emphasis.

'You may, Mr. Clairon, but I don't know if I can tell you.'

'Don't you know who I am?'

'As far as I know you're a radio commentator. We're the C.I.C. That's the difference.'

'One more word from you, and I'll report you to your main office!'

'That would be Bamberg, Mr. Clairon.' Joe's pleasant tone goaded Clairon into a fury.

'Let me inform you that this concerns an urgent matter of high secrecy!' His voice was shaking. 'An extremely urgent matter! If I cannot speak to Captain Keen this instant, you'll take the consequences. Now where can I reach him?'

'There's no need to shout. Captain Keen will be back any minute. If there's anything you want with him, you'll have to wait for him here.'

Clairon sat down speechless on one of the chairs and lit a cigarette. His hands were trembling.

Clinton did not turn up for more than an hour. Entering the room casually, he slapped Clairon on the shoulder in greeting, lowered himself into the chair opposite and in the same movement swung his feet up on to the desk.

'Well, where's the fire?'

Clairon could barely restrain himself. He let out his anger at Joe on Clinton. He recounted the episode with Gisela and Rebrière, and then the conversation with Karin in every detail. He exaggerated the story in order to disturb Clinton.

Clinton listened patiently. 'And in your opinion there's something suspicious about all this?'

'I'm firmly convinced of it.'

'About the conversation with . . . ' He swallowed the name 'Karin'. ' . . . Miss Ruland too?'

'That confirmed my suspicions!'

Clairon's tone led Clinton to conclude that he knew nothing about their intimate relationship, and that he did not realise how much resistance he was meeting with in his incrimination of Karin.

'Perhaps Miss Ruland has – well, let's say – no particular liking for you, and wanted to get away during the midday recess, and for that reason simply said yes to all your questions?'

'That has nothing to do with why Karin answered the way she did. She's positively proven that there's something wrong with this Silinski woman. And it's your business to find out exactly what.'

'Just a moment! One girl wants to have nothing to do with a French secret-service man, the other wants nothing to do with you. I'm sorry, that's way off being a case for the C.I.C.'

'Are you refusing to take this matter up?'

'Refusing? Now that's a hard word. It's just that I'm responsible for the work we do. And right now we've got enough damned stuff on our hands.'

'But these are facts. Gisela Silinski was formerly named Bernsdorff. And if, for example, she's filled out a questionnaire and put down false information . . . '

'Just a second, Raoul. It's not certain that she was really called Bernsdorff before. She could have made up that name for Rebrière.'

'Okay. But what's there to stop us from driving over to Kreling Street?'

'Time, Raoul. I'm under a lot of pressure.'

Clairon stood up abruptly. 'All right. If you won't come I'll go alone. It'll just take a little longer for me to persuade our high-ranking colleagues to look through the questionnaires. What happens if I'm right?'

Clinton took his feet off the desk and stood up too. 'I'm coming along.'

The former finance department in Kreling Street was where the Military Government had installed itself. It took a while before Clinton had the questionnaire filled out under the name

of 'Gisela Silinski' in his hand. Together with Clairon, he went through it.

'You see!' Clairon exclaimed triumphantly. 'No mention of Bernsdorff!'

'That doesn't mean anything.'

'That means at least that we'll have to sound out this young lady very carefully.' Clairon tapped his finger on point 'B' of the questionnaire: Elementary and Higher Education. 'Do you really believe that an intelligent person like that only attended elementary school? And if she did, we should ask her for the exact address of the school! Just "Dresden" won't do. How convenient that the city was destroyed!'

'I'll question her some time . . .'

'No! I insist on an immediate interrogation! If it makes it easier for you, I'll file a charge against her.'

'A charge? What for?'

'Here.' Clairon's finger was pointing to question 3: Other names used by you or by which you are known. 'This answer is false! She should have entered the name Bernsdorff here!' He became excited. 'I can always get permission straight away from higher up.'

'No need for that, Raoul. I'm slowly beginning to think there's something fishy here. I'm just a bit sceptical about the magnitude of the thing.'

'That's up to you. Does it bother you if I stay on the case personally?'

'You can come along as far as I'm concerned.' Clinton had the questionnaire issued to him and signed for it.

'And Karin Ruland?' Clinton fully realised the danger that threatened Karin. He had to prepare her for an interrogation in the presence of Clairon. His wristwatch said shortly after 6 p.m. 'We've got to go over to the office first.' He wanted to send Joe to Rothenburg Street. With luck, Karin would already be home.

In the office Joe rushed up to him impatiently. 'We've got him!'

'Who?'

'The man Ballsteiner was shadowing. The M.P.s have just brought him in.'

'Where is he?'

'Next door. One of the M.P.s is with him. Do you want to interrogate him right away?'

'Yes.' Clinton looked at Clairon. 'I'm sorry, naturally this

takes precedence. You'll have to be patient.' Before Clairon could give vent to his displeasure, Clinton vanished into the interrogation room with Joe following him.

Clairon clenched his fists. It was one of those days when everything had gone wrong. He had no desire to let himself go on being treated by the C.I.C. as though he were just anybody. He needed immediate confirmation of his power.

In the interrogation room, Bruno Peters was sitting on the chair in front of the desk. In his civilian suit he looked as though he belonged to the army of black marketeers rather than an S.S. battle-group. He stared straight in front of him, his face giving away nothing. He could not believe that the Americans had caught him. Had someone betrayed him? Were his comrades also under arrest? His only hope seemed to be the possibility that the Americans knew nothing about the 'sunrise' operation, and that his arrest was a mistake.

The more he considered this possibility, the more likely he thought it. He refused to believe that the Americans could have smashed the battle-group just twenty-four hours before the operation was due to begin. In his opinion Lainz's safety measures were flawless.

Little by little his features lightened. He would answer their questions confidently, and once the error was cleared up he would certainly leave there free of any suspicion. His Luger lay safely tucked away behind the wallpaper in his lodgings. No one would find it there. If he had had it with him as usual, then it would have been easy for them to keep him there for a long time. Possession of a weapon without a permit was punishable with not less than six months in prison . . . then another thought flashed through his mind: the I.M.T. identity card.

The forged identity card was in the breast pocket of his jacket. He felt as though the piece of paper was shining out through the cloth, as though it were burning his chest.

Clinton sat down on his chair, stretched his long legs under the desk, and began the interrogation.

Peters claimed his name was Schmitt, and handed Clinton an identity card in that name. Clinton held it out to Joe with a sign. Joe knew what he meant. In the next room he examined the identity card under the microscope to see if it was genuine. Then he went back to Clinton and gave him a signal.

Clinton turned to Peters. 'What's your real name?'

'My real name? I already told you. Schmitt.'

'Where did you get this identity card?' Clinton held the card in his hand and tapped it with his forefinger.

'In Munich. Doesn't it say that on there?'

Clinton made no reply. One glance to Joe was all it took. Joe got up again and went across to his office to telephone the C.I.C. in Munich.

Meanwhile, Clinton went on with the interrogation while the secretary took over the notes.

'How long have you been in Nuremberg?'

'About two months.'

'Where did you come from?'

'Munich.'

'Are you registered here?'

'Not yet.'

'What do you mean, not yet? Don't you know that you're supposed to register within three days?'

'My stay here was extended one day at a time. Originally I intended to stay only two days.'

'And why are you still here?'

'I came to Nuremberg to visit my sick uncle. His illness got worse. I have to take care of him.'

'What's your uncle's name?'

'Ebelein.'

'Where does he live?'

'Seven Schlossäcker Street.'

'Does he live alone?'

'There are other people in the building, but my uncle lives alone.'

'How old is he?'

'Early forties.'

'And what disease is he suffering from?'

'Circulatory weakness.'

'Can circulatory weakness go on getting worse for two months?'

'Not get worse. But it can last that long.'

'Didn't you say just now you came to Nuremberg because your uncle was sick?'

'Yes, that's right.'

'Sick with circulatory weakness, right?'

'Yes. After two days it didn't get any better, but worse instead. Since then it hasn't increased any more.'

'But it's so acute that you have to take care of him?'

'As far as possible, yes.'

'Nights as well?'

'Nights as well?' Peters faltered. He could not understand the point of the question. He thought feverishly. Why should this C.I.C. man want to know if he also looked after his uncle at night? He was about to make a reply, and was going to answer with a brief 'yes', when he realised the intention concealed behind the question. 'No,' he said, 'not at night. That is, not any more.'

'So you don't live with your uncle?'

'No. Not any more. Now I live at 102 Bucher Street, in a friend's house.'

'What's the name of your friend?'

'Gallmüller. Herbert Gallmüller.'

With a glance towards his secretary, Clinton made sure that everything was noted down. He left the room. Outside, Joe was still on the telephone to Munich. With a gesture, he indicated to Clinton that Clairon had gone. Clinton nodded. At that moment Clairon was of no interest to him. He would attend to Gisela Silinski later.

If the call to Munich did not produce any confirmation that the papers were forged, he would not be able to put the screws on.

Joe put the receiver down. 'Okay. You've won. There was no identity card issued in Munich in February under the name of Hubert Helmut Schmitt.'

'Then let's get over there again.' Clinton held the door for Joe. 'We'll switch on.'

Joe lit up the two arc lamps. At once Peters held his hands up to shade his eyes. Joe took over from the secretary. Clinton went back to his former position.

'Who gave you your identity card?'

'The Residential Registration Office in Munich.'

'I'll ask you again. If you stick to your answer, I'll keep you here for eight days without talking to you any more. Well?'

'All right, I bought it on the black market.'

Peters realised he was completely in the C.I.C. man's hands now, and could only hope that he would be lenient. 'I'd lost my identity card, and my uncle told me that the owner of the building wouldn't let anyone without papers live there.'

Clinton did not bother to pursue the question of the identity

card any further, and changed his tactics. 'Before you came to Nuremberg, were you in Munich?'

'Yes, that's right.'

'How long were you there for?'

'Actually the whole time.'

'Which whole time?'

'Since the end of the war.'

'Since the end of the war? You stayed all that time in Munich?'

'Yes.'

'And you've never been in any other place since the end of the war apart from Munich and here?'

'Yes, that's right.'

'Not even for a short period?'

'For a short period?'

'Let's say for a few hours or a day?'

Once again Peters saw he was faced with a question which could be dangerous. Since he could not see the purpose behind it, he answered vaguely: 'Naturally I did go to a few other towns for a day.'

'Including Wurzburg?'

'No, not to Wurzburg.'

Peters thought the question confirmed his suspicion that he was the victim of a case of mistaken identity. He relaxed.

'Nor to Regensburg, Landshut or Ingolstadt?' Clinton asked as though just in passing.

'No,' said Peters, 'not there either.'

'Okay,' said Clinton, and indicated the door to the next room to Joe with his head. Joe brought Billsteiner in.

Pointing to Peters, Clinton asked him: 'Is this the man?'

'Yes,' said Billsteiner, 'that's the man.'

'Definitely?'

'Quite definitely. He was wearing an army greatcoat at the time.'

'Okay,' said Clinton to Billsteiner, and then to Peters: 'Give us the names of the people you met with in Landshut! Come on, don't take all day thinking it over!'

'In Landshut?'

'Am I not making myself clear?' Clinton raised his voice. Suddenly he was overcome once more by his dislike of everything German.

'In Landshut,' said Peters hesitatingly, 'yes, I did once spend

a short time in Landshut. I'm sorry, I didn't think of that at first. But the visit to Landshut wasn't particularly important.'

'What did you do in Landshut?'

'I tried to find out the address of a friend.'

'Nothing else?'

'No. Nothing else.'

'And where did you go in Landshut to find out the address of this friend?'

'Everywhere. In the town hall and everywhere.'

'In the whole of Landshut?'

'No, of course not. In the Old Town. Yes, and in an inn in the New Town.'

'And did you trace the address?'

'No, unfortunately not.'

'Had you ever been to Landshut before?'

'No, never.'

'But nevertheless you know your way about there extremely well'

'I've a good memory, yes.'

'You haven't yet given much sign of that here. Well let's test this memory of yours. Do you recall that one of the landmarks of Landshut is Trausnitz Castle?'

'Yes, I know.'

'Then perhaps you will also know that the castle stands on a mountain above Landshut?'

'Yes, naturally.'

'And how long did you say you were in Landshut? One day, one hour?'

'One day.'

'By train or by car?'

'By car.'

'Hitch-hiking?'

'Yes. I don't have a car of my own.'

'Do you remember what time you got up on that day?'

'Got up? At about seven, or six.'

'And where do you live in Munich?'

'In Munich? In Rosenheim Square.'

'And how long does it take to get from Rosenheim Square to the main road leading to Landshut?'

'A good half hour on the tram.'

'Including changing?'

'Longer including changing.'

'I want to remind you that all your answers will be checked. So how long? One hour, two?'

'Two hours including walking.'

'And roughly how long did you have to wait beside the road to Landshut till a car stopped? One hour? Two?'

'Half at the most.'

'Okay, half an hour. And you got a car right away which drove straight through to Landshut?'

'Yes. Directly.'

'And how long did the car take to drive to Landshut? One hour? Two?'

'Just over an hour.'

'We'll say an hour and a half. So at the earliest you were in Landshut four hours after the end of curfew. That would be between ten and eleven. And what time did you go back in the evening? Five at least?'

'Yes, about five.'

'So you had between six and seven hours' time to enquire about the address of your friend?'

'Yes, roughly.'

'And you went to the town hall, the Old Town and even an inn in the New Town?'

'Yes, I did.'

'Approximately how long would you say you were in the inn? One hour? Two?'

'In the inn?' Suddenly Peters had the feeling that he had got himself deeply entangled in a situation from which there was no escape. It seemed certain that he had been observed in the inn, and he was wary of making a false statement of his movements during that time.

'Let's say a good hour.'

'About an hour and a half, then?'

'Yes.'

'So you only had four-and-a-half to five-and-a-half hours outside the inn to find out the address of your friend, is that correct?'

'Correct.'

'And since this address was so important to you that you undertook a total of at least eight hours' strenuous travelling to get it, and since, as you say, you weren't able to find the address despite intensive enquiries, I assume that you devoted those

four-and-a-half to five-and-a-half hours solely to searching for the address?’

‘Yes,’ said Peters hesitantly, ‘you could say that.’

‘Then how do you explain,’ asked Clinton at random, ‘that in spite of this tremendous pressure of time you were under, you still took out at least an hour to climb the mountain of Trausnitz Castle and make a visit to the Castle Gardens there?’ Clinton shouted at him. ‘Give me an answer! If you lie, the interrogation is finished for today and will be started again in fourteen days at the earliest!’ He knew, of course, that he had no right to make that threat, but there was no other way of getting through to the man.

‘I admit I made a mistake just now when I just gave a general reply to your question and failed to mention my visit to the Castle Gardens.’ Peters appeared apologetic. He did not know that it was only by this confession that he had given Clinton proof that he had been in the Castle Gardens at all.

‘You call that a mistake? I call it a lie! A serious, deliberate lie!’ Clinton’s voice rang out sharply. Next moment he said, in a dangerously soft tone: ‘What did you do in the Castle Gardens? Who did you meet there?’

‘Some old friends if you really want to know.’

‘No, that’s not what I want to know! I want definite information from you. I’ll ask you for the last time: Who did you meet in the Castle Gardens? I want names! Real names!’

‘I’m afraid I can’t help you there. I was asked to go to the Castle Gardens by some men I did not know.’

‘The great unknown! What kind of a fool do you take me for?’ Clinton got up quickly and signalled to Joe that the interrogation was over as far as he was concerned. Outside he took Joe aside. ‘This thing stinks. We must get the guy to talk, no matter how!’

‘Let’s take him apart, inside and out.’

‘Okay Tell him to get undressed.’

A few minutes later they found the I.M.T. pass made out in the name of Herbolsheimer. Joe checked it to see if it was genuine. When they knew it was forged, they ripped every article of his clothing into pieces. They tore the soles and heels from his shoes, undid the seams of his trousers and cut the lapels off his jacket in search for concealed papers, for any indication of where the man had come from, for any even conceivably incriminating item. The search was fruitless.

Joe brought Peters an old American uniform. He put it on without making any objection. He realised his situation was virtually hopeless now. Protest would only make it worse.

Clinton had decided to try another piece of bluff. He took a few notes from Billsteiner's report and put them in an empty portfolio. Then he took the paper over to the interrogation room. He sat down sideways next to the desk, and opened up the paper in such a way that Peters could not see what it contained. Joe switched on the lights, and Clinton went on with the interrogation.

He acted as though he already had the complete 'Peters case' down in a report.

'What's your real name?'

'Kienlechner.' Peters wiped the sweat from his forehead with the back of his hand.

Clinton was much too experienced not to repeat the question. 'I'll ask you again. What is your real name?' His tone was menacing.

'My name is . . .'

'Before you go on, I'd like to point out to you that you're no longer going to get away with these lies.' He tapped the portfolio. 'All I have to do is refer to the report. Your friends have already confessed.'

'My friends?'

Panic showed in Peters's face.

'Yes, your friends. Or has your exceptionally good memory let you down?' He pretended to read from the documents. 'On May 23rd we met at nine o'clock in the morning at the Water-Lily Restaurant.' He looked up. 'Do I have to read you any more? Now, what's your real name?'

Peters sat motionless. He felt as though he were falling into a bottomless abyss. 'Peters,' he said almost inaudibly, 'my name is Peters.'

'Quite right.' Clinton looked in the portfolio again. 'And your first name?'

'Bruno.'

'When were you born?'

'March 3rd 1920.'

'And where?'

'In Gadebusch in Mecklenburg.'

'Correct,' bluffed Clinton, convinced that Peters was now telling the truth. He knew he could not ask him about the names

of the other men without making him suspicious. Apart from that, the other men would unquestionably be as stubborn as Peters. No, he had to work on the weakest link in the chain. And in this case it would be the woman who had been present by the Dutzend Lake. Especially since, thanks to Billsteiner, he had her approximate description to hand.

Clinton looked at the sheet of paper and read aloud from his notes. 'Age between twenty-five and thirty-five. Shoulder-length brown to reddish hair, pretty face.' He glanced over to Peters. 'Does that description tell you enough?'

'I don't understand . . .'

'The woman who was with you beside the Dutzend Lake. We're only interested in the woman. Not in you or your friends. We're interested only in the woman. You should know that. All I need from you is confirmation of her name, do you understand now?'

'Yes.' Peters tried in vain to avoid the harsh light of the lamp.

'Did you hear? You are to confirm the name of the woman for me. What's she called?'

'I . . . I don't know.'

'That reply would have sealed your fate. I'm going to have that reply struck out. You know perfectly well we'll get the woman's name. We'll also discover that you are aware of the woman's name. Your only chance is right here and now! Do you want to take that chance? Or do I have to give you the woman's description once more?'

Peters shook his head almost indiscernably. 'The woman is called Silinski. Gisela Silinski.'

For an instant Clinton was stunned. Even if he had had to consider every possibility, he would never have made a connection between Gisela Silinski and Peters. He drew a deep breath. He had what he wanted.

The Summer-Time introduced by the authorities meant that it did not become dark until about nine o'clock. In Burgfarnbach, parents were calling their children indoors. Raoul Clairon had Kretschmer stop by the war memorial opposite the 'Bear Inn'.

He had waited until this hour because he had not wanted to appear before Henrike 'Berger' by daylight. For what he planned to do, he needed the shadows of night. The mere thought of the woman in room 5 of the Post-House Inn caused

a wave of sensuality to sweep over him.

A smile played around the corners of his mouth at the thought that today he would achieve his goal. 'Here, Kretschmer.' He pressed ten marks into the chauffeur's hand. 'Wait for me in the "Bear". This could take some time.'

'Thank you, Herr Clairon.'

'And you will forget this visit!'

'Certainly, Herr Clairon.'

'Good. Then I wish you a pleasant evening.'

'Thank you, Herr Clairon, the same to you.'

Clairon grinned significantly. 'If I'm not back by ten, sit in the car.'

As Clairon made no preparations to leave, Kretschmer locked up the car, crossed the street and disappeared into the pub.

Clairon watched him go. Then he walked over the bumpy cobblestones up the gently sloping Wurzburg Street, crossed the road leading to the back parts of the village, and went into the 'Post-House Inn'. Without seeing anyone he mounted the creaking stairs to the upper storey. He knocked on the door of room 5.

From inside a weak, surprised 'Just coming' could be heard. There was a rustling, then footsteps, the sound of the key, and Henrike 'Berger' stood before him. 'You?'

'May I come in?'

'Yes, of course.' She let him past and closed the door.

Only then did he notice she was wearing a dressing-gown. It came down to her ankles. She was about to go to bed, he thought with satisfaction, and looked around the room. Meticulous order. The curtains were drawn, the covers of the bed folded back.

'It's very fortunate you came.' She held her dressing-gown closed over her breast. Her voice was cool.

Clairon paid no attention. He was too busy with his fantasies. He saw her naked, white, full body before him, and pictured to himself how he would take her and humiliate her.

He produced a packet of Chesterfields from his pocket, shook one out and offered it to her without a word. She refused it politely. He took the cigarette himself, lit it, and sat down at the table. 'I have come here to fulfil my promise.'

'You mean our deal?' She was still standing by the door.

'Deal? Didn't I tell you that I know nothing about any deal?' He laughed disparagingly. 'Oh no, my dear, the promise to go to bed with you! Don't you remember?'

'Mr. Clairon, you're mistaken.'

'You don't remember?'

Before she realised the seriousness of her position, he leaped on her and grabbed hold of the lapels of her dressing-gown.

'Are you insane?' She let out a repressed scream.

He did not allow himself to be put off. He caught hold of her wrists and pushed her on to the bed.

Her eyes widened with horror. She struggled for breath.

He threw himself on top of her, grabbed her wrists again and pressed her down with all his might. 'Go ahead and scream! Come on, scream! Put on a nice little show for everyone. Come on!'

'Please! Please let me go!' Her voice was breaking.

'Okay. I'll let one of your hands go. You will unbutton your gown. Do you understand?'

She did not answer. She tried to get free of his grasp. He pressed her back once more. She was gasping for air.

'Are you going to unbutton your gown?'

'No!'

'In that case we'll arrange things differently.' He began to push her dressing-gown up with his knees.

'I told you to leave me alone!' She mustered all her strength and managed to turn over on to her side. 'Leave me alone at once or I'll . . .'

'What, are you going to set me a time-limit?' He laughed out loud.

' . . . or I'll expose you!' She looked at him burning with rage. 'I'll expose you, Herr Klarmann!'

For a moment he did not move a muscle. His grip loosened. 'What was that you just said?'

'It's fortunate you came.' Her breath came in short gasps. 'I was going to see you anyway.'

'I mean what did you say just now?'

'I addressed you by your name. You heard me.'

He thought for a second. 'And you wanted to see me anyway?'

She nodded and tried to sit up, but he continued to hold her.

'And why did you want to see me?'

'To tell you that I know more about you than your name.'

'Oh? You were going to blackmail me?'

'No. Just let you know. All I want you to do is leave me alone.'

'I suppose you think you're very clever?'

'I think you're a cheat.'

'Stand up!' He let go of her wrists and slid off the bed.

She sat up, smoothed her hair back from her face, straightened her dressing-gown and got to her feet.

'Sit down over here!'

'What I have to say to you I can say just as well standing up.'

He pulled up a chair for himself, sat down, took off his glasses, cleaned them carefully with his handkerchief and held them up to the light to examine them. 'What have you got to say to me? Come on!'

'I want to tell you that I don't want to be bothered by you any more. That the best thing for us is to forget we ever met. That's all.' She took a step towards the door.

He paid no attention. He lit a cigarette and looked up.

'You think you can make conditions just because you know my name?'

'I do, yes. But I don't think the conditions are very onerous for you.'

'Haven't you assumed another name too?'

'Yes, I have, but not officially.'

'You're not living under your real name in this inn, are you? Isn't that official enough?'

'You can't try and pressurise me. You're forgetting that I have nothing to lose.'

'What do you know about me?'

'I know that your name is Klarmann. Isn't that enough?'

'That remains to be seen. Where did you find this out?'

'From people who have looked into your past after I told them about my visit to your apartment.' She was no longer afraid of him. Whatever he threatened to do, she would not betray the name of her friends, the couple who had originally arranged for her to get in touch with Clairon.

'And what are these charitable people called?' When he got no reply, he said: 'I see, Teutonic loyalty. Very well. And is that all that you know about me?'

'Yes, that's all.' She said it with an emphasis that left every doubt still unanswered in his mind.

He stubbed out his cigarette and stood up. 'And what do you intend to do about it?'

'Nothing. If you leave me in peace.' She opened the door. 'And if you give me my ruby necklace back within one week.'

'You're crazy!'

'Whatever you say. However, now you know where you stand.'

'I think we should turn the tables. If you and your so-called friends don't keep quiet, I shall see to it that your husband has no chance left whatever!'

'You're overestimating your influence.'

'We'll see about that.'

He walked out of the room and across the dark corridor to the stairs. As he went out through the main door, the landlord shouted after him, asking him where he had come from, but he made no answer, and walked down Wurzburg Street towards the war memorial. He felt he had made a sufficiently impressive exit to produce the right effect on Henrike 'Berger', and was convinced his threat had struck home.

Gisela Silinski opened her eyes. It was dark. For an instant she did not know where she was. Then she made out the shadowy form of the table, and recognised her familiar surroundings. She had fallen asleep on her bed.

She sat up, felt for the switch, put on the light, and went over to the window. It was raining. She closed the curtains. It was just before nine o'clock. She had lain on the bed for seven hours without moving. Had she woken up only one hour later, it would have been too late for her to carry out her part in the operation.

In a feverish hurry she got herself ready, ran a comb through her hair, picked up her raincoat and left the room.

The nearby church of St. Michael was just striking the quarter-hour as she stood in Ulrich Lainz's narrow room.

'You've come at the very last moment.'

'I'm sorry. I hope you haven't been waiting here for me all day.'

'I have. You must have got my telegram by about noon at the latest.'

'It arrived this morning . . .'

'We've got to get the truck now. It's two streets away in front of the sports-ground. You will drive it up close to your flat and park in Palm Square. The back is closed and the straps are tied. Before you drive off tomorrow morning, undo the straps to the back flap. Is that clear?'

'Yes. Except . . .'

'You leave tomorrow at 12.30. You take the route via

Johannis Street to the Neutor, from there to the Plärrer, down Furth Street and you park on the corner of Bärenschanz Street. The place next to you will be kept free for me. Any questions?

'No. But some not particularly pleasant news.' She told him about the incident with Rebrière.

'And you think Hammersmith became suspicious?'

'It's possible. I couldn't say for sure.'

'And Rebrière? Is there anything he can do about you?'

'Not here in the American Zone, unless . . .'

' . . . he goes to the Yanks. To the M.P. or the C.I.C. Well?'

'I can't tell you any more than that. All I know is I was noticed by an Allied agent.'

'I don't see what difference that should make to us. Except that now it's clear that tomorrow is the last possible day for us. If this man Rebrière had in fact gone to the Americans, I mean successfully, then you would have been hauled in long ago. Come on, I want to make sure you can handle the truck.'

Clinton Keen arrived in front of number 3 Frauenholz Street in his BMW 328 at the same time as the jeep of the military police. Gisela had just turned off into Linden Street. He had only just missed her.

When he had made sure that she was not at home, he had two more patrol cars sent over and gave the military police an exact description of Gisela Silinski. He posted one in the flat. One jeep sealed off the way into Frauenholz Street from the Johannis Graveyard, one parked on the corner of Kirchen Street, and the third was in Rohlederer Street facing towards Frauenholz Street. Clinton himself drove his BMW into Linden Lane and pulled up under a tree.

He switched the motor off, wound the window down, lit up a cigarette and stared out into the semi-darkness. His wristwatch said 9.35. He thought of Karin. How would he feel if she had really lied to him about Gisela Silinski? Would he still be able to trust her? Would he have to report her? Despite the cool evening breeze which blew into the car, he felt hot. Now that he had organised the search for Gisela Silinski, now he had sent immediate notification to the Military Government and to Colonel Andersen, the security machinery was set in motion. He was no longer in a position to stop it. He could only hope that Karin would not be caught up in it.

*

Colonel William Andersen had received the report at about 8 p.m. He had sounded the alarm for his troops at once. Within ten minutes all the available men had assembled in the open courtyard of the west wing. Andersen gave his orders for the protection of the court building.

Extra ammunition was issued, machine-guns were placed in position, and in the corridors of the building G.I.s fortified strategically important points with sandbags. All the sentries were reinforced with two extra men and the night guards were relieved half an hour earlier. Andersen gathered his officers around him in his headquarters. Besides two others, Bob Hammersmith was missing. He had gone off on evening leave.

This was the first evening for months that Bob had missed his talk with Clinton. Since he had been with Gisela, he had only seen his friend now and again in the courtyard of the law-courts or in one of the corridors inside the building. Neither asked how the other spent his free time, and neither volunteered the information. Nor had either of them ever suggested they should visit the mess together again.

Nevertheless, Bob would have liked to today. After his period of duty, he had driven his jeep out to Erlenstegen to talk Clinton into an evening in the mess as before. He had not found him in. The only thing he could find out from Joe was that Clinton was following up a lead in some urgent secret matter.

He accepted this information, and drove alone to the former S.S. barracks at the end of Allersberg Street. The mess was overcrowded. He stood at the bar and downed beer after beer. His eyes gazed past all the lively activity, his thoughts with Gisela.

He saw himself standing with Gisela on the landing before the court-room, saw the thick-set man in French uniform come up to them, heard him address her as 'Madame Bernsdorff', saw her turn pale.

After the third beer he realised he had made a mistake. He should have stopped this mysterious 'Commissaire Rebrière', talked to him and demanded an explanation. In the same instant he admitted to himself that he had deliberately avoided this explanation.

Now the incident threatened to undermine his trust in Gisela more and more as each hour passed. Much as he struggled against it, many of the things she had said and done suddenly struck him in a new light. He remembered the evening when

she had gone to meet that so-called colleague of her father's and had apparently missed him. She had been nervous, snappish, as though she had something to hide.

Then there was the discussion about the S.S. prisoners-of-war — why had she been so vehement? Situations which he thought he had forgotten long ago came back to him. He recalled the way she had given him back the bunch of keys which slipped out of his pocket. If he remembered correctly, she had been strangely embarrassed about it.

These isolated facts seemed to him to have no direct connection. Yet they were sufficient to make Gisela's excuse that she had to meet her father's colleague again today seem exceedingly thin. He was not prepared to accept it.

After two more glasses of beer he struggled through to a decision — he would drive to Frauenholz Street and make quite certain that she really was spending that night away from home. He had to find out, even if it meant being confronted with an unpleasant truth.

The grey Opel-Blitz stood in the dark beside the wooden fence of the sports ground. It had stopped raining. A wind was blowing up from the east. It swept the clouds along before it. Every now and again the moon would light up the scene.

Gisela walked from the bonnet to the back. 'I imagined it would be bigger.'

'Three-and-a-half tons. Room for everyone. Here.' Lainz gave her the keys. 'Let's see what you can do.'

She opened the door, swung herself into the driver's seat, inserted the ignition key and started up.

'You see,' Lainz called to her softly, 'it works! Now turn, and then I'll get in.'

She handled the truck as though she had never driven anything else. 'What now?' she asked, once Lainz was sitting next to her.

'The best thing is to go to Brücken Street, then turn left and drive along by the graveyard.'

She hesitated.

'What's the matter?' he asked. 'Are you still thinking about that man Rebrière?'

'No,' she said, 'someone else. But it's all right.' She reversed, turned and then drove at a moderate speed in the direction of Brücken Street. 'Are there papers for the truck as well?'

He felt inside his breast pocket and passed her the permit. 'Just in case. I'll have them back afterwards.'

'Are they in my name?'

'In the firm's you're working for. Künzel and Walter.'

'And what do I carry?'

'Food.'

'Are there any crates in the truck?'

'No. You're driving back empty. Tomorrow morning you will be on your way back to the company in Schwabach. You will only be stopping in Bärenschanz Street because you are waiting for another employee you have to take back to Schwabach with you.'

She changed down and turned into Brücken Street. 'Have you got any news of my father?'

'Nothing concrete.'

'What then?' She shot him a glance.

'Just that the trial in Dachau will not be taking very much longer now.'

'What does that mean?'

'That means that we can expect the verdicts to be handed down in the next few weeks, and that we have set the time for our operation at exactly the right moment.'

'I don't understand that.'

'After the sentences have been announced, the security arrangements are tighter. Now is our greatest chance.'

'And where do I see my father?'

'Most likely in Lisbon. In Buenos Aires at the latest.'

'And who guarantees me . . .'

'The organisation. Hemmersbach. All of us. No, don't turn right. We'll drive on down Brücken Street as far as Sandrart Street.'

She turned the vehicle back. 'And what happens if things misfire in Dachau?'

'They can't misfire. Hemmersbach has got thirty men in Dachau.'

'Thirty? Is that enough?'

'That is more than twice as many as in the other places. In Passau, for example, there are eight, nine in Kempten and, so far as I know, there are fifteen in Darmstadt. Besides, in Dachau the contacts inside the camp are one hundred per cent certain. You can depend on it that your father . . . ' He broke

off suddenly and grabbed hold of the steering wheel. 'Drive straight on, look right now, keep a steady speed!'

'I thought we were driving to Palm Square?'

'There's a jeep on the corner. M. P. Doesn't necessarily mean anything. But we don't want to take any risks.'

'M.P.? On which corner?'

'Corner of Frauenholz Street.'

'Are you sure?' Her voice became thin.

'Don't make me laugh. The M.P. are my speciality. I can smell those boys a hundred yards off. Turn off up there into Haller Street. The headlights of the jeep were switched off, but its position gave it away.'

'Its position?'

'No car parks like that normally. It was standing there like -- hell, let's drop it. We don't want to start exaggerating its importance.'

Anxiety could too easily attract danger. The jeep was parked in such a way that it could watch the approach to the street and also be ready to give chase in either direction. Although Lainz could not imagine that the presence of that jeep could have anything to do with them, prudence dictated that they keep well away from any risk.

Gisela turned into Sandrart Street and then made a right turn into Haller Street. In Palm Square she brought the truck to a stop behind the bombed-out church.

'Is it all right like this?'

'Yes.' Lainz jumped down into the road. 'I'll take you home.'

'Why?' She was not particularly delighted with the suggestion.

'Just thought I would. Seeing that I've got time.'

'And seeing that the jeep was there?'

'No. The jeep doesn't mean a thing.'

She put up with his company, even though she would far rather have taken a short walk through the cool night air on her own. In silence they got as far as the beginning of Rohlederer Street when Lainz grabbed her by the arm again. He pulled her into the shadow of a house.

'There's a second jeep standing there ahead of us!' he whispered, and his grip forced her to duck down.

'M.P.?'

'Yes.'

'After us?'

'Impossible. Back, they've seen us!' He pressed her against the wall of the house with the flat of his hand and peered out cautiously at the jeep. 'They're coming towards us. We've got to run for it!'

'Won't we make ourselves really suspicious that way?'

'Not if they don't recognise us and don't catch us.' He weighed up the odds in a flash. 'We'll run towards the graveyard. If we get separated, we meet by the sports-ground in one hour. Is that clear?'

'Okay.' In the excitement without thinking she used the American expression she had grown accustomed to from spending time with Bob.

Lainz shot her a disapproving look. 'All right – go!' He took hold of her arm and pulled her along with him. They ran down Rohlederer Street, hearing the soft thudding of rubber-soled U.S. army boots and loud shouts of 'Stop!' Then suddenly the steps retreated again and the jeep started up.

'To the graveyard!' Lainz was still holding Gisela firmly by the arm.

'If it's locked, then over the wall.'

'What if they see us?' All at once she lost all her courage. Her thoughts and all her strength had been concentrated on the task she had to perform next day. She had managed to prepare herself after a long, agonising inner struggle. She had no stomach for this present development.

'They won't see us. Stay close to me!' He hurried past some ruins with her, over the dark crossroads of Frauenholz and Johannis streets into Linden Lane and along the wall of sandstone blocks. The gate to the cemetery was unlocked. A loose iron chain was wound round the lock.

'We're out of danger now.' With swift movements Lainz undid the chain and pushed Gisela before him through the gate.

'Thank God!' She sighed with relief.

In their haste they had not noticed either the jeep that was parked in the shadows at the crossing of Frauenholz and Johannis streets, or Clinton, who had watched them from his BMW in Linden Lane. Before they had gone through the cemetery gates, Clinton leaped out of the car.

The Saint Johannis Cemetery in Nuremberg was among the most impressive graveyards in Europe from the artistic point of view and in terms of cultural history. Its earliest beginnings dated back to the fourteenth century. The graves of the middle

ages had all survived and covered almost half of the total area of the cemetery. The epitaphs made it a site of great cultural and historical interest.

Now, in 1946, the cemetery watchman, who lived in what was known as the Kirchner House, had to devote his full attention to the thieves who came in the night. They hammered, chiselled and broke the bronze and brass plates out of the sandstone, melted them down and sold the bronze and brass in the form of metal ingots.

Today, on the evening of the 4th of July, the watchman was especially alert. A few days earlier, thieves had wrecked the lock at the entrance in Linden Lane. Since then the two leaves of the gate had only been held together by a loose chain. Until he could get a new lock, he was prepared to sacrifice a great deal of his nightly rest in order to protect the cemetery.

It was divided into an old and a new part. Each grave had a number. The old part lay primarily over towards Linden Lane. The gravestones were set close together in irregular rows, flat, scarcely a foot high, without any vertical crosses or projections, broad, long and rectangular. Scattered among them were low-growing cypresses, weeping willows, silver firs, small birches, and thick growths of ivy spread over the stones.

As Lainz pulled the gate shut behind him, the chain swung against the iron bars. In the Kirchner House the watchman pricked up his ears. He was sitting with his wife at the table. They were just looking through an album of yellowed photos of their relatives which they had kept intact through the war.

'Did you hear that?'

'The wind. Probably a window.' His wife was unconcerned.

'Sounded more like a gate.'

'You're always hearing things!'

'I'll just take a look.' He stood up awkwardly. His leg was hurting more today than usual. In the retreat from Russia he had been severely wounded in the thigh. For some months now he had accepted that he would never again be able to walk normally. He went over to the hook on the wall and took down the official cap without which he never made his rounds.

When walking to and from the law-courts Gisela had walked twice every day through Linden Lane past the man-high sandstone walls of the cemetery. Occasionally she had glanced at the wall, not knowing what famous burial places were concealed

behind it. And it would never have occurred to her that one of the epitaphs on the graves would one day have any significance for her.

'Come on!' Lainz pulled her along a narrow paved path between the graves. 'Can you still make it?'

'Not much longer.' She could hardly catch her breath.

'We're almost there.'

'Where are you going?'

'We'll hide by the chapel behind that cypress. I know the place well. They can look for us there as long as they like. As soon as the coast is clear, we'll climb over the wall.' He gripped her arm. 'Stand still!' he said, and listened to the sounds of the darkness. 'Can you see that house back there?'

'Yes,' she whispered, 'the outline.'

'Watch out, gravestones!' He pulled her along with him off the path and under one of the weeping willows. 'Get down!' He froze quite still, bent double.

For at least a minute they squatted beside one another in silence. The noise of a car braking hard reached them from Johannis Street. Some little patches of cloud cleared away from the moon.

'What about the house?' She looked at him.

'Which house?'

'The one you just asked me about.'

'The man in charge of the graveyard lives there. I heard something from over there.'

'Do you think he heard us?'

'We'll soon find out. We mustn't move. If he comes too near, I'll fix him.'

'You're going to . . . ?' – 'No, not shoot him. A blow will do it.' He clenched his hand into a fist as though to prove his strength.

Meanwhile the watchman had reached the tenth row of graves. He was moving in the direction of the weeping willow under which Gisela and Lainz were standing.

Bob Hammersmith arrived in Frauenholz Street just as Clinton was running to the M.P. jeep which was guarding the entrance to the street, concealed by a ruin.

Bob recognised his friend and put his foot down hard on the brake. The squealing sound of the tyres rang out into the night. Clinton spun round. 'You? What are you doing here?'

'I was just going to ask you that.'

'Later, Bob. We've got a big fish on the line.' And then to the two military police: 'Come on, after them!' He pointed to the entrance to the cemetery. 'Be careful, they could be armed! They mustn't get away. But I'd rather take them alive.'

'What's it all about, then?' Bob did not leave Clinton's side.

'Be patient.'

One of the military police came up to Clinton. 'How many are they?'

'As far as I could tell, two.'

'Two men?' Bob would not be put off.

Clinton took no notice of him. 'Yeah, I think so.' He was talking to the two military policemen. He drew his Smith and Wesson and ran ahead of them towards the cemetery gate.

He had not yet reached it when the two other M.P. jeeps braked beside him at full tilt. He quickly explained the situation to the men. They drew their heavy revolvers and joined the group round Clinton.

While still at the gate, Clinton divided the men up. Two he sent to the left in the direction of the Holzschuher Chapel, and the other couple to the right along the inside of the wall bordering Johannis Street. He was going to advance along the main path.

'And me?' Bob was standing next to him.

'You can come with me.' Clinton realised that as a member of the C.I.C. he had no authority over the military police. He disregarded that. In this case it was important to make a quick and unconventional decision.

Lainz saw that a figure was limping towards them on the path to the right of the weeping willows.

'What should we do?' Fear pressed in on Gisela's throat.

'Quiet! Don't move!' He did not take his eyes off the figure.

The watchman stopped. He heard voices coming from the entrance on Linden Lane. Half-right in front of him the silhouette of two men stood out against the wall. He thought he was outnumbered. In order to bolster up his courage he shouted in the direction of the silhouettes: 'Get away! Or I'll call the police!'

Lainz and Gisela did not move. They held their breath.

Then the watchman picked up a stone which he had stubbed his foot against, and threw it towards the weeping willows.

'Out!' Lainz grasped Gisela's upper arm and led her in a crouching position into the maze of graves. She offered no resistance. He made two or three jumps, and then pushed her down on to the ground with all his might. 'Wait for me here. I'm going after that fellow.'

She lay flat on the sandy ground, face downwards. Without raising her head, she gasped: 'Wouldn't it be better for us to climb over the wall?'

'Straight into the Yanks' arms? No. I'll take care of the old boy. Then we can get some breathing-space.'

Before she could say anything else, he crawled on his stomach past the gravestones on her left, and then on towards the narrow path. Every now and again he raised his head above the stone breastwork, watching the figure come nearer and nearer, and just as he was about to spring he saw two more figures walking along the path. If he was not mistaken, they were holding guns. He saw the limping figure turn to them, and heard the shout: 'Get away!' The moonlight shone on the path. Lainz could see quite clearly that one of the men was wearing an American uniform.

Clinton and Bob went up to the cemetery watchman.

'C.I.C.,' Clinton lowered his voice. 'Are you the watchman?'

'Yes, that's me.' The cemetery watchman also began to whisper.

'We're looking for two men . . .'

'They're over there. I scared them away with a stone.'

He pointed to the spot where Gisela was still lying, pressed flat against the ground behind a gravestone. The ground had been soaked by the rain. She lay with her face in a small puddle, not daring to move. The dampness was seeping through her clothes.

Lainz realised he had made a mistake. Clearly the M.P. had seen them run into the cemetery. Now they were trapped.

He knew he could get himself to safety on his own, but if Gisela fell into the hands of the M.P. she would not be able to stand up to a rigorous interrogation. He would have to take her and help her get out of the cemetery, no matter what the risk.

He crept back.

'We've got to get away from here.' They lay with their faces close together, and she could feel his breath.

'Are there many of them?' Her voice betrayed naked fear.

'Not so far. That's our chance. Can you crawl like a seal?'

'Like a seal?'

'Pull yourself along on your elbows.'

'I'll manage.'

'You crawl behind me. The important thing is to keep your head down! Leave the precautions to me.' He pushed past her and then went to the right between the graves

'Okay,' she said, more to herself, and followed him blindly.

They had already covered a few yards when suddenly the beam of a powerful flashlight swung across their heads. Instinctively they stopped dead and pressed themselves flat against the ground.

'What was that?' She was trembling.

'Torches. It's time we got going. We'll wait for the next beam to come this way, and then afterwards we run straight for the wall. Are you ready?'

'Yes. And what if they catch us?'

'They won't catch us! I know my way around here.' He wanted to bolster up her courage, but his words did not sound convincing. 'Head down!' The beam swept towards them again.

She buried her head firmly in the earth.

The beam went over them and then probed away further to the left.

'Now!' Lainz jumped up in a crouching position and raced along between the graves.

'Stop! Don't move! M.P.!'

Clinton's height was a problem. However much he bent over as he moved, and however much he tucked his head down, he could not prevent himself from being easily visible. After a while he gave up trying to hide behind low hedges and trees, and pursued the two fleeing figures with his head up.

He ordered the military policeman with the flashlight to come over to him. The beam caught one of the two figures. 'Stop! Don't move! M P.!' he shouted loudly across the cemetery, and his voice echoed back from the chapel.

All at once the eerie silence was broken. The other military policeman also shouted 'Stop!' into the darkness, and the cemetery watchman felt obliged to shout 'Don't move!' as well. They were all moving in the open now, and their footsteps could be heard clearly.

Gisela leaped up and ran behind Lainz.

'Stop! Halt! Don't move!' She heard the shouts behind her, saw the beam of light coming towards her again and dropped to the ground.

At that moment shots rang out across the graveyard. Four, five, six, it seemed they would never come to an end.

She lay with her head beside one of the flat, rectangular memorial slabs. Behind her forehead she felt a burning sensation.

She wanted to think of Bob, but the thought slipped away from her. She saw herself facing Jürgen, her fallen husband.

He was wearing the uniform of an S.S.-*Untersturmführer* and was driving an armoured reconnaissance vehicle over a cornfield. Suddenly a flame darted from the hatch and a huge cloud of smoke enveloped the vehicle.

Jürgen bowed to her. 'Do you mind if we leave the wedding-party?' – 'No, not at all.' The BMW sports car sped along the Avus. A tree came nearer and nearer, and grew to enormous size. She opened her eyes and looked into the face of Professor Sauerbruch.

She rode in a taxi with Jürgen along the Kurfürstendamm as far as the Halensee and went through the busy traffic of Friedrich Street to Unter den Linden. He pressed a wreath of a thousand dark red roses into her arms.

She buried her face in the flowers. When she looked up, her father was standing beside her. 'We're going to the gasworks!' – 'Yes, and we'll carve pipes out of elder wood!' – 'The market garden has been made a wild-life preserve.' – 'Where's mother?' – 'On a journey round the world.'

She walked down an avenue of perfectly straight poplars. Her school-friends, the department head at the Tietz department store, the porter of her flat by Scheitniger Park, her hair-dresser in Berlin, they were all coming towards her. All except for Bob.

She consoled herself with the thought that those you love the most are always the hardest to picture. A smile of contentment spread across her face.

The sounds of the shots died away. Clinton ran to the centre of the cemetery. Bob was still beside him.

Suddenly two more flashlights lit up and plunged the tombs in a ghostly light.

'Over here!' shouted Clinton, and the beams of light moved

in the direction he was running.

'Careful,' he shouted, 'they could be armed!' But the military policemen did not take his warning seriously. They were running across the graves from all sides, shouting 'This way!' and 'Back there!' and 'They've got away!' and all the time, getting closer to grave number 650.

Bob, running beside Clinton, was annoyed with himself for thinking his presence was of any importance in the pursuit. His thoughts were with Gisela. He should be waiting in her flat now. He was ready to ask her to forgive him for his mistrust.

'Clinton?'

'What is it now?'

'I'm taking off.'

Clinton ran on.

Bob was about to turn away from him, when from grave 650 came the shout: 'Boys, over here!'

'What is it?' Clinton called back.

'We hit one. A woman.'

'A woman?' said Bob. The fact that it was not a man but a woman, roused his interest. Without being able to explain why to himself, he ran on after Clinton.

Grave number 650 was narrow. Three stone slabs lay one above the other, with the top one projecting slightly. The epitaphs were in the form of a tablet, a coat-of-arms and a medallion with a coat-of-arms fixed to the plate. The inscription read: I. *Hans Braun, Barber and Surgeon, died 1521*. II. *Hans Braun, died 1592*.

As Bob arrived, the others were already standing together, lighting up a figure which lay at their feet.

First he saw a hand. In the glow of the flashlights it looked strangely waxen. Then he saw the ring. Panic gripped his throat. Fear froze his thoughts.

One of the military policemen stepped aside, and he saw the face. As though of their own volition, his lips spoke her name quietly.

'Gisela?' Clinton pricked up his ears. 'Gisela Silinski?'

Bob closed his eyes as though to drive away a ghost. Yet the certainty that he was faced with a reality was choking him so he could not breathe.

'Did you know her?' Clinton looked at him.

Bob said nothing.

'Did you really know her?'

'Is she . . . dead?'

'Yes. Did you know her?'

'Slightly.' Bob turned away. Only now did he realise that he had never spoken to Clinton about Gisela, that his friend knew nothing about their relationship. He walked slowly along the narrow path between the graves.

He had already reached the path leading to the exit when Clinton caught him up. 'You don't have to answer now. I mean, if you don't feel like it. But you should know that this is very important.' Clinton spoke quietly and urgently. 'Your statement could be of decisive significance.'

'What do you want to know?'

They got into Clinton's car. For a while Clinton gazed through the darkness at his friend, until Bob made a gesture of resignation.

'You know we're friends,' said Clinton, 'and you can depend on that friendship one hundred per cent.'

'Thanks.'

'I'll keep it short. First question: how well did you know Gisela Silinski?'

'Do I have to answer that?'

'It's up to you. But for my sake . . .'

'Okay. I knew her very well.'

'When did you meet her?'

'When?' Bob tried to remember. His first meeting with Gisela seemed an eternity ago.

'Roughly?' Clinton coaxed.

'It was on the day when Goering spoke as a witness in his own defence.'

'About four months ago, then,'

'Could be.'

'And through whom did you . . . ?'

'Through nobody.'

'And during these four months did you get to know any friends or acquaintances of hers?'

'Nobody.'

'Nor hear any names from her?'

'Nothing.'

'Not one single name in four months?'

'Not one.'

'No references to anything? Parents' home, war and so on?'

'Nothing.'

'Didn't she ever talk about herself?'

'Sure. But I think . . .'

'You assume she lied to you?'

Bob nodded. 'Hard as it is for me to believe.'

'I know how you feel. Maybe it's better that way.'

'Maybe.'

'And you never had any arguments?'

'Do you really need to know?'

'It's important, believe me. Was there no incident that seems to you important enough to tell me about?'

Bob hesitated. The scene with the bunch of keys came to his mind, the obvious excuse about her father's colleague, the meeting with the Frenchman that morning.

'Nothing?' Clinton flipped his cigarette out of the window.

'No. I'm sorry. Can you tell me what . . . ?'

'More or less. She was connected with a group of S.S. conspirators.'

'That's impossible!'

'It's proven. One of them squealed on her.'

'I don't believe it. And even if you show it to me in black and white, I'll never believe it. Can I go now?'

'I'd like to drive you home. One of the M.P. guys will bring your jeep.'

'If you want.' He stared straight ahead without moving. All he wanted to do was sleep. Sleep deeply and endlessly.

Ulrich Lainz reached the wall. Behind him he heard the crack of shots. He turned round, but Gisela was nowhere to be seen. A quick decision: he gave up on her. With one jump, he managed to catch hold of the coping, pulled himself up, rolled over the wall and dropped down on to the pavement.

To the left he could make out the parked jeeps of the M.P. in the distance as he ran in the direction of the Pegnitz. He kept in the shadows avoiding the main streets, taking cover as soon as he heard the sound of an approaching car.

Half an hour later he stood in front of number 10 Heidelberg Street. The street was in semi-darkness and deserted. There was only one light on in the third storey of the building. Lainz tapped on one of the windows on the ground floor. After a while, an old woman appeared at the window. 'What do you want?'

Lainz apologised and explained that he had missed the last

train home, and wanted to see a friend who lived there.

'And you wake me up for that?'

'I'm terribly sorry, but I couldn't think of anything else to do. It's curfew.'

'What's your friend's name?'

'Schilling.'

'And where does he live?'

'On the second floor.'

'Wait here.'

Lainz knew the risk he was taking. The Americans could have found out about Schilling, occupied his apartment or secretly cordoned off the area. He was prepared to see a military policeman appear at any moment. But he had no choice. He had to get a picture of the situation of the battle-group, and if necessary call the action off for tomorrow.

'Hallo, can you hear me?' The woman was back.

'Yes?' Lainz looked down the street on both sides, and then up to the window.

'Your friend's coming to the door.'

'I'm most grateful to you.'

The woman mumbled something surly and disappeared. Lainz went to the other side of the street and watched the front door. When Schilling stepped out and waved to him, he knew there was danger.

In the Saint Johannis Cemetery, the military police abandoned the search for the second person. They laid the corpse of Gisela Silinski on a tarpaulin and two men carried her to one of the jeeps, placed her on the back seat and drove her away to be examined by the police pathologist.

Although Gisela had been fully shielded by the gravestone where she had been lying, she had been killed by a bullet in the head. In front of grave number 649, the tomb of Albrecht Dürer, was grave number 618, bearing the epitaph: *'Comrad Most, Coppersmith, and his wife Elisabeth Trümmer, died beginning of the 17th century, and Mertta Deinhartt, died 1575.* A bullet had ricocheted from the edge of this epitaph and struck and penetrated Gisela's forehead at an angle.

After Clinton had taken Bob home, he drove back to his office and subjected Bruno Peters to a fierce interrogation. But Peters remained stubbornly silent. He had thought over his situation in the meantime, and come to the conclusion that he would make no further statements.

Clinton suggested to the military authorities that they should immediately set about checking the identification of all visitors, press-men and observers in the law-courts. In this way, Lothar Wilfarth, Karl Nessen and Utz Grau were arrested.

Early next morning Lainz had gone with Schilling to try to let Bruno Peters, the next most important of his men, know about the new situation. He was told that Peters had been missing since yesterday afternoon, and that the M.P. had made a search of the house. Lainz decided to cancel the operation. For the time being, as he said. But it was too late to tell all the men in time, and he was only able to reach Elmar Stührk.

On the 5th of July 1946, Elmar Stührk, Ralf Schilling and Ulrich Lainz, as the last of 'Battle-Group Edelweiss', were still at large. Lainz ordered them to take up new quarters outside the city. He himself travelled immediately to Frankfurt to get in touch with Hemmersbach. But he was too late there as well. Karl Nessen had given away the name of the former S.S.-*Standartenführer* to the C.I.C. Hemmersbach had been arrested.

Lainz went to Wiesbaden, to Darmstadt, and to Augsburg. In none of these places could he reach a contact-man for the general operation. One week later he received confirmation from the newspaper that the general operation had failed too.

The report read:

'NAZI PLOT SMASHED.

**1000 ARRESTS IN GERMANY AND AUSTRIA.
HITLER YOUTH LEADERS AS ORGANISERS.**

Frankfurt, 15th July (DANA) —The American military authorities have broken up a subversive movement which was built up over an extended period, and is described as the most dangerous so far. In raids in the American Zones of Germany and Austria, about 1000 people in this movement, engineered primarily by former members of the Hitler Youth and supported by the financial reserves of the same organisation, have been arrested, according to a statement by Brigadier-General E. L. Sibert from the offices of the Military Government in the U.S. Zone.

The first to be arrested were 5 Hitler Youth Leaders and 200 other persons who were known to have been aware of the conspiracy. Among these are Arthur Axmann, the former Reich Youth Leader, Willi Heide-

mann, a former *Oberbannführer* in the Hitler Youth and Head of the Youth Welfare Section in the Reich Youth Administration, Gustav Memminger, *Hauptbannführer* in the Hitler Youth and Head of the Press and Propaganda Department in the Reich Youth Administration from 1944, Kurt Badeus, regional leader of the Hitler Youth and S.S.-*Sturmbannführer*, former Head of the Personnel Department of the Reich Youth Administration, Willi Lohel, regional leader of the Hitler Youth and former Commandant of Region Number Seven, North Sea.

The leaders of the conspiratorial group succeeded in finding out the addresses of almost 1000 people whom they believed they could rely on in the creation of a government on the Nazi pattern, which was planned for much later.

General Sibert declared that during the investigation no indication was discovered that the group were going to extend their activities into the French or Russian Zones. It was only in the last weeks that signs were noticed in the Russian Zone, and the Soviet authorities in Berlin notified.

General Sibert said that many of the arrested persons may not have been aware of the real intentions of the leaders of the conspiracy. Such people would be released again later on, provided they did not belong to one of the categories of persons who were to be taken into custody automatically.

Those arrested also include a number of women, some of whom were themselves party members or held leading positions in the League of German Maidens, or are married to former Nazi officers. A few of them confessed to having known about the insurrectionary movement of the former Hitler Youth leaders, while others claimed they could not give any information about the structure or plans of the movement.'

Lainz went back to Nuremberg and got in touch with Schilling and Stührk. He made up his mind that the three of them should carry out an operation on their own initiative with the aim of wreaking revenge on Jackson or one of the judges. Schilling and Stührk agreed.

The only question was when.

Chapter Fourteen

Vesenstedt stood up, went to the microphone, opened up his manuscript and began to make his defending speech. He spoke calmly and without passion. The interpreters had no difficulty with the translation.

'Members of the Tribunal, Mr. President, as a result of your generous decision, fourteen days of the proceedings have been allowed for twenty-one pleas. You will see from the size of the copy of my manuscript before you that I shall not by any means be taking up all the time set aside for me. Not because there is not all that much to be said about the former Reichs Minister "Friedrich Berger", but solely because I am in the fortunate position of representing a client who himself has come to understand that by serving as a Reichs Minister he took on a burden of guilt before God, before mankind and before himself.'

Vesenstedt looked up from his manuscript and glanced across the room. All eyes were fixed on him. He had achieved what he had intended with his opening sentence. He wanted to let it be known that he was keeping his plea quite separate from those of the other defendants' counsel. This was taken note of.

'On your recommendation I have agreed on the themes and ideas in my speech with my colleagues. It is on the basis of this arrangement that I am able to disregard the question of the legitimacy and recognition of the Tribunal and its Charter here. This circumstance is broadly in keeping with the views of my client and myself. I would therefore like to preface my words with a statement by my client: 'Even though this court is only a human court, and accordingly, like any court of this world, cannot be beyond all human error, it is nonetheless important for me in finding my way back to a belief in a humanity determined to uphold its ideals of justice and morality.' This thought of my client's does not mean to sweep away the differences between the court and the defendants, but, on the contrary, to make clear where the divisions lie. My client is prepared to accept fully and completely the judgment of this Tribunal. I

therefore request your understanding if, unlike my colleagues, I do not plead for a particular sentence, but devote my time exclusively to the clarification of the charges brought against my client.'

Vesenstedt noticed how the stifling air in the room was drying out his throat. He took a sip from the glass of water. 'I am not concerned with finding out whether, for example, the so-called German-Soviet secret pact . . .'

Lawrence, who so often seemed tired and listless, was as wide awake as ever when the direction taken by the proceedings was in his view in contravention of the Tribunal. He stepped in. His voice sounded unhurried. 'Counsel, you would save us still more time if you could leave out this pact. In my opinion it has been mentioned sufficiently often already.'

For one instant Vesenstedt was annoyed that he had referred to the pact at all, especially as he was not introducing it in evidence, but only as an example. 'I shall not mention the pact.'

'Thank you, Counsel. Please continue.'

Vesenstedt began again. 'It does not appear to me of significance if the opposing side during the period of the war performed deeds which might perhaps also be indictable. Such actions would not undo those of my client. In order to illustrate these actions, I would like to remind you of a few focal points in his life.' In a few brief words he described the rise of 'Berger' within the N.S.D.A.P. and the government, and pointed out the strict moral principles according to which he appraised his work, and was about to go on to speak about his personal relationships with the leaders of the Third Reich.

The American prosecutor McNulty indicated he wanted to say something. Lawrence interrupted Vesenstedt and asked McNulty to be as brief as possible.

McNulty leaned over towards the microphone. His cheek-muscles were tense. His eyes seemed to be trying to pierce right through Vesenstedt. 'Counsel, there has been a great deal of talk about morality here. Yet no one who has used this concept has employed it so irrelevantly, so totally without explanation and as such a general excuse . . .'

Lawrence cut him short. 'Prosecutor, I do not consider it appropriate for you to take over the function of judge here. Please restrict yourself to your question.'

For a second, McNulty was confused. Then he looked at Lawrence. 'I had no wish to exceed my brief. I regret it if I did

so.' And then to Vesenstedt, with a harsh emphasis: 'Counsel, is it possible for a minister of the Third Reich to have had strict moral principles, appraised his work according to them, and nevertheless not have resigned? If you answer my question in the affirmative, I ask that you give me your reasons in full.'

Vesenstedt was ready for this question. He took his time in giving the answer in order to heighten its impact. 'This question appears to me quite justified. That is, if I have not succeeded in explaining to you, Prosecutor, under what religious influence the life of my client has been led. Since this seems to be the case, I would like to go into this point once again in more detail. My client comes from a strictly Protestant home. He was brought up in the belief that all authority was willed by God. From this upbringing sprang his unshakable sense of loyalty, which he was not able to set aside even in the face of conflicts of conscience. I concede that this reason might appear incomprehensible to many people. I have only given it on the prompting of the gentleman of the prosecution. My irrelevant and totally unexplained reference – to use the words of the prosecutor – to the moral feelings of my client are not in any way meant to serve as an excuse, but only to correct the picture, the erroneous picture, of him.'

He wiped his forehead with his handkerchief. The tense attentiveness in the room showed him that he had won a partial success. 'If I may, I will now briefly touch on the meeting of my client with the principal leaders of the Third Reich in order to demonstrate to you what an outsider my client was. For ten full years he was a minister under Hitler, and not one single time was there a personal conversation between them. With Goebbels, Himmler, Bormann and Goering it was no different. My client may have been welcomed by the great figures of the Third Reich as an expert in economic policy, but not as a man, not as a party comrade on an equal footing. I am not trying to claim that my client was not a National Socialist. I wish only to make it clear that he was not accepted as such by the men of the leadership.'

He glanced over to the judge's bench. Lawrence was resting his chin in his hands. His glasses had slipped forwards on his nose. Vesenstedt knew that this meant that he was taking the greatest interest in what was happening.

He was now speaking relaxedly and with thought. He explained the division of power within the cabinet, mentioned the

fact that there were virtually no general sessions of the cabinet, and that each member of the cabinet could therefore only be held accountable for his own sphere of responsibility. His client, then, could not be held accountable for military or political crimes. In his view that eliminated him from the charges of the indictment under count one – conspiracy, count three – war crimes, and four – crimes against humanity.

The Soviet Prosecutor, Colonel Massov, raised his hand. Lawrence invited him to speak.

Massov walked up to the microphone. His voice was an angry snarl.

‘Counsel, in your opinion does the economic policy of a country not constitute an indispensable contribution to the maintenance of the state?’

‘I can only answer yes to your question.’

‘So you agree with me that economic policy is a decisive factor in the building up of a state?’

‘I agree with you.’

‘Of the National Socialist state too?’

‘I suppose so, yes.’

‘And do you wish to deny that the building up of this state did, among other things, also include the policy of a general conspiracy?’

‘Yes, I do wish to deny that.’

‘You really wish to deny that there was a general policy of conspiracy?’

‘No, that I do not wish to deny. I only dispute that it constituted part of the building up of the state.’

‘What did it constitute, then, in your opinion?’

‘Part of the plans for the expansion of the state.’

‘You mean, the preparation for the war?’

‘That the attempt to expand would result in war could not be foreseen.’

‘Perhaps not foreseen, Counsel. But the possibility had to be taken into account, would you not agree?’

Vesenstedt had underestimated Massov. He realised he could not evade his questions through petty points of wording. ‘I do agree, Prosecutor. But I also point out to you that my client had no influence whatever on any preparation for war. My client was responsible for economic policy in the area he was concerned with. Whether or not this economic policy was utilised for the preparation of a war lay outside his realm of influence.

And in my opinion it also lies outside count number one of the charges of the indictment.'

'Do you also wish to apply the same reasoning to count number four of the indictment?'

'Yes. My client has not committed crimes against humanity.'

'Do you not consider enslavement and forcible deportation to be crimes against humanity?'

'I do. But my client has not committed any such crimes.'

'Thank you, Mr. President, I have no further questions.'

Massov returned to his seat.

Vesenstedt realised that the Soviet prosecutor had proceeded with great skill. His questions had been designed with the sole purpose of giving him an opportunity to demonstrate the narrow tightrope which 'Berger' had walked between pure economic policy and the points of the indictment on which he was charged. Vesenstedt inwardly conceded Massov his respect.

He continued his speech, going carefully into the difference between 'orderly planned distribution of labour by obligatory service' and 'slave labour', drew a distinction between the terms 'penal deportation', and 'relocation' and 'forced labour', describing only 'penal deportation' as inhumane.

He discussed in detail 'Berger's' constant quarrels with the Central Economic and Administrative Section of the S.S., his difficulties with the Reich Ministry of the Economy, and his close co-operation with the Polish administrative officials.

A quick glance at the clock told him that he would not be able to finish his plea that day. He dragged it out so as to be able to give the conclusion in a single reading in the morning session next day.

The following day, Vesenstedt concluded the plea. 'Berger' sat in his place in the dock as though he were not involved. He kept his eyes half-closed and his hands folded together in his lap. Seyss-Inquart took a discreet look at him. He had the impression that 'Berger' was dreaming.

For days 'Berger' had been tormented by two thoughts. One of them brought him back to his son, Claudius. He pictured him as he had seen him last in Tegernsee—dressed in the uniform of the cubs, pale, thin, with large, questioning eyes.

He had put his arm around his shoulder, and they had looked at one another in silence for several seconds. And then Claudius

had said: 'Goodbye Father, I've got to go for roll-call.'

For roll-call!

'Berger' could not get the word out of his mind. The last word his son had spoken to him. He clutched at the memory as though it could show him a way into the future. Never again must Claudius have to go for roll-call, never again! He pictured in his mind how he wanted to guide his son's life, how he would protect him from all political dangers. He pictured the image of a perfect father-son relationship, and yet he did not know if he would ever even see his son again. He shuddered. He came out of his dream. Breathing heavily he held on tightly to the balustrade.

Little by little he made out the surroundings. In front of him were the backs of the defending counsel. Then the bent heads of the stenographers. The raised judges' bench with Major-General Nikitchenko, Lawrence, Eiddle and the others. Half-right from there, the desks of the prosecutors, Russians, Americans, English and French. The stand in front of them. Vesenstedt was there.

'Berger' took out his handkerchief and wiped it over his forehead. He noticed that by mistake he had put on the headphones without switching them on. He took them off. He heard Vesenstedt's voice as though from far away. It came nearer and nearer, and 'Berger' returned to the present.

Vesenstedt looked up from his manuscript, over the heads of the stenographers, to the judges. As before, they were giving him their full attention. He began to deliver his final passage.

'In this building during the past eight months, sometimes quite rightly, but also very often as a clumsy alibi, the so-called Führer Adolf Hitler has been mentioned. A great deal of different things have been said about Hitler, and in all likelihood still more different things will go on being said about him in the future. I do not feel myself justified in expanding on Hitler's character. I have, however, been authorised by my client to make the following statement on the subject of Hitler:

'My client declines to appeal to Hitler as his highest source of orders. My client does recognise that Hitler, together with Himmler, exercised the greatest individual authority. My client knows, too, that simply through his position and his influence on the people, Hitler shouldered the greatest measure of guilt of all the leading personalities of the Third Reich. When Hitler said that the Jews were Germany's misfortune, his subordinates

took this judgment as a death-sentence for the Jews. When Hitler went before the people and said that Germany needed war, the overwhelming majority of them made this view their own. My client was also aware that simply by the power he wielded, he was able to compel his closest and highest assistants to perform deeds which, in their innermost being, they condemned. However, my client refuses to appeal to Hitler.

'The offence of which my client here confesses his guilt before man and before God, cannot and could not be lifted from him even by Hitler. My client was too weak, too lacking in will, too spineless, and certainly too cowardly, to stand up to Hitler. It is from this that his guilt arises.

'My client concedes that the man of the people had no possibility of resisting Hitler's power and the power of the Party. The man of the people may invoke this powerlessness, this weakness, in his own defence. But not a Minister, not a man who through the power of his office had the opportunity to open the eyes of the unknowing people and strengthen the resolution of those who did know by opposing Hitler and the Party, if only by his resignation.

'My client recognises himself to be guilty in this way, and expects his just punishment.

'And not least, remembering the juridical practices of the Third Reich, I thank the Tribunal for giving me the opportunity to make this plea.'

After a slight bow to the judges, he went back to his seat. 'Berger' had been listening to the last part of the speech. Vescstedt looked across to him. Their eyes met, and expressed approval.

In the early evening of that day, Elmar Stührk stood on the pavement in front of the Gustave Adolf Church and looked across the steeply-sloping Allersberg Street at the Binz Inn with a certain amount of wistfulness.

This was the first time he had come back to this neighbourhood since he, with Lainz and Schilling, had moved to new lodgings. Lainz had, it was true, expressly warned them against visiting places where one of them might possibly be recognised, but Stührk had succumbed to the lure of the Binz Inn. Yet now he did not know whether he dared to cross over and drink a beer in the always smoke-filled bar-room.

Just as he had made up his mind to heed Lainz's warning and

was about to set off for his lodgings in the Wederau district, a girl and a man left the inn. It was Barbara Vesenstedt and Paul Tanner.

Stührk did not recognise Barbara. He saw her point in his direction, but assumed it had nothing to do with him and began walking up Katzwanger Street.

Barbara had pointed out Stührk to Paul. She tried to stop him confronting Stührk, saying she had long ago forgotten the incident and no longer felt any resentment towards the young man. But Paul was caught up in a wave of hatred for all Nazis and insisted on following Stührk.

When they had gone as far as the heavily bomb-damaged little Hummelstein Castle, he barred Stührk's way.

'Hey, are you drunk?' Stührk acted tough.

'I want to talk to you!'

'You can kiss my arse!' He tried to push past Paul.

'Leave him, Paul.' Barbara looked at Stührk almost pityingly.

Then he recognised her. 'Ah, so we meet again!'

'How nice that you remember!'

Stührk threw a quick glance down the street. They were alone. 'I'll say I remember!' he said superciliously.

'Then apologise! Before I break your bones one by one.'

'I'm sure you'd like that.' With a jerk, Stührk freed himself and ran off.

'Let him go, Paul! He's not worth it.'

'Barbara, no, I can't do that!'

For a moment she stood not knowing what to do. Then she ran after the two men. She saw Paul run down Franconia Street, and then lost sight of him.

Much further on, where Franconia Street ran into Ulmen Street, he came towards her. 'He got away. But I saw which house. I'll get him yet!' He was out of breath.

She took his arm and they began to make their way back. She tried to calm him down and suggested that he was not so much concerned with avenging her, as with unloading his pent-up hatred for everything to do with the Nazis.

'You're probably right.'

'Paul, we must all be able to forget. Victors as well as vanquished. And you too.'

'Never. I'll never forget.'

'Paul, pull yourself together! You're free now and healthy

and have strength enough to build a new life for yourself. I only want to make you remember your own values '

'My values are all burned out! So long as I haven't done for that p.g of a court-martial judge, I spit on all values!'

'Whatever you say. In that case go ahead and hunt down your quarry once and for all.'

'That's what I'm doing.'

'What?'

'Forgive me. I never told you the full truth.' His voice was gentle 'I didn't come to Nuremberg by chance. I had a tip that the fellow was supposed to be staying somewhere round here.'

'You had a . . . ?'

'You know the signs people put up?'

'On trees, walls of houses and fences?'

'Exactly. "Information concerning the whereabouts of" and so on. I've been busy. I had the description of the man, his service rank and the number of his unit S.S. *Hauptsturmführer* in the 38th S.S.-Armoured Assault Division. I put up hundreds of signs. One was successful. I have one clue.'

Chapter Fifteen

Thursday, the 25th of July. 'In Dachau the former S.S.-*Brigadeführer* Heinrich Franz Olciomek, earlier sentenced to death, was executed.'

Clinton Keen read the report and put the U.S. army newspaper the *Stars and Stripes* to one side. He stood up and stretched himself as though to shake off his bad mood.

The past three weeks had changed him. Clinton refused to show just how upset he was by the discord with Karin. Three weeks earlier he had spoken to her for the last time. Ten days ago he had made a feeble attempt to get in touch with her. She was not at home, she did not work for Clairon any longer. It was over, finished.

Clinton swept the *Stars and Stripes* from the desk with an angry motion of his hand.

The door opened. 'You've got a visitor. A man.'

'Well?' Clinton stooped down for the newspaper.

'Called Lubska.' Joe grinned at Clinton and added: 'He's a D.P.'

'And what does he want?'

'He'll only speak to you.'

Clinton considered for a moment, and then gave Joe a signal to bring him in. In his present frame of mind, any distraction was welcome.

The couple who had arranged for Henrike 'Berger' to get in touch with Clairon, had stumbled upon Lubska. Lubska had, like Clairon, spent a few months in a German concentration camp. There he had learned about Clairon's past. He told the couple about it, who then passed the information on to Henrike 'Berger'. Frau 'Berger' suggested to the couple that it might be a good idea to bring Clairon's past to the attention of the C.I.C. with the assistance of Lubska. They functioned as the go-betweens.

Jan Lubska was forty-five years old, of medium height and spoke a mixture of German, English and Polish.

Clinton drew up a chair for him. 'Sit down.'

'Thank you.'

'Are you German?'

'No, Pole, D.P.'

This expression stood for 'displaced person'. This was the description used for those workers who were deported from the occupied countries to Germany during the war: Poles, Russians, Czechoslovaks, Frenchmen, Belgians, Dutchmen . . .

After the war D.P.s enjoyed special privileges from the Allies. In the U.S. Zone, for example, they were cared for by the U.N.R.R.A., given preferential advancement and in some cases appointed as guards of U.S. store camps and dressed in khaki uniforms.

Jan Lubska was wearing just such a uniform. On his sleeve was stitched a red stripe with the word 'Poland' on it. 'I am coming about Clairon.' When Clinton looked up, startled, he added: 'Raoul Clairon. Or also Klarmann. Josef Klarmann.' He looked at Clinton expectantly.

'Go on.'

'I have now discovered Klarmann. He is radio speaker with the Germans.'

'Tell me everything you know.'

'I was with him in Flossenbürg. Concentration camp. Close to German-Czech border. Has pretend to be inside for political, but was for criminal in the camp.'

'And why were you in the camp?'

'For sabotage of German armament.' Lubska paused 'Klarmann has denounce prisoners Now I have see him again In American uniform. With a sign "Haiti" on the sleeve I thought, I don't see right. Jan, I say to myself, this will interest the Americans. And while the Americans are my friends, I have come here.'

Clinton was suspicious Too many people came to the C.I.C. to slander others. Not until he had checked Lubska's statements did he have a record taken of his charges against Clairon the following day.

Lubska hesitantly put his signature to the written declaration.

'And what did you get for making this statement?' Clinton looked at him hard.

'Get? From who? Nothing! Why should I have got something?' Lubska wisely kept silent about receiving a gem worth around 20,000 marks. He had got it from the people he knew.

He did not know that it in fact came from Henrike 'Berger'.

The reward of the gem had, however, not been necessary. His enmity towards Clairon was reason enough for Lubka to go to the C.I.C.

Clinton shrugged his shoulders, handed the declaration to Joe and relied on him to investigate it.

Saturday, the 31st of August. The last day of the trial before the announcement of the verdicts. The defendants were to give their closing statements.

On that day Paul Tanner became twenty-seven years old.

Clouds drifted across the sky, showers of rain alternated with sunshine and a cool wind blew from the east, an unseasonable wind which made people shiver.

Early in the morning Clinton Keen felt himself being woken roughly.

'You?' Joe stood beside his bed.

'Here, read this.'

'Now, in the middle of the night?'

'It'll soon have you up.'

Joe was right. Before Clinton had read through to the end, he was wide awake. He struck the report with the back of his hand. 'If only half of this is right, then we've well and truly put our foot in it!'

'You're telling me. What are we going to do?'

Clinton skimmed through the last lines.

'Only one thing to do. Notify Bamberg straight away, and Headquarters too.' That meant the Headquarters of the U.S. Army in Heidelberg.

'Isn't Kreling Street enough?' Kreling Street was where the Military Government of Nuremberg was situated.

'No, Joe. This thing's too hot. Let the top boys burn their fingers on it.'

The report on Raoul Clairon which Clinton had just read was based mainly on research into the records of the former concentration camp of Flossenbürg, in the Upper Palatinate. Before Clairon had been sent to Dauchau a few months before the end of the war, he had spent two years in Flossenbürg.

Raoul Clairon, alias Josef Klarmann, was born in Odenburg, now called Sopron, in Hungary, close to the Austrian border. As a seventeen-year old he went to Vienna. At eighteen he appeared before a judge for the first time. He had stolen 860

schillings from a colleague. Sentence: eight days imprisonment. Half a year later, he forged a cheque for 5,000 schillings and was sentenced to eighteen months in gaol. He did not serve the last three months. He escaped, turned up in Berlin, and a year later was convicted there once again. He now called himself Jo Hollman, had circulated unsecured cheques to a value of 31,000 Reichsmarks and was supposed, since the prisons were over-filled, to be sent to a hard-labour camp. Once again he managed to escape, this time to Spain.

In July 1936, the Civil War broke out in Spain. Josef Klarman called himself Raoul Clairon and got wind of the chance of a lifetime. Via Tangiers, then known as the 'Shanghai of the West', he dealt in arms on a large scale. He needed no passport in Tangiers and no formalities were required. He set up an office on the Boulevard Pasteur. He supplied both Franco and the revolutionaries with weapons which had small faults.

When he came to Spain in the course of his business transactions, the Nationalist troops arrested him. Not wanting to be bothered with him, they handed him over to their German allies who had Klarman/Hollman on their wanted list.

On the 23rd of April, German police officers accepted custody of Raoul Clairon. They took him to Mannheim Gaol. From there he went to Straubing Prison, then to Flossenbürg Concentration Camp, and finally to Dachau Concentration Camp.

In Dachau Clairon and all the other prisoners were liberated by U.S. troops. He said nothing about being in the concentration camp as a criminal.

When asked about his profession, he claimed he was a journalist. Unsuspecting, the Americans immediately favoured him with every kind of preferential treatment. He settled in Munich, opened a news agency, and within a few months was provided with three requisitioned apartments and five cars by the U.S. Army. He became the sought-after centre of the social life of the immediate post-war period. He hobnobbed with the aristocracy, film actors and also the American officers responsible for Radio Munich.

By what means Clairon had become Chief Commentator of the Nuremberg Trial, the report did not say.

Headquarters in Heidelberg decided the case should be treated as a secret matter. In order not to damage the standing of the occupying powers in the eyes of the population, it deter-

mined to leave Clairon in his post as Chief Commentator until the end of the trial, and to arrest him quietly when he was no longer in the limelight.

Today, on the 31st August 1946, apart from Clinton Keen, Joe Stevens and the man who had provided the information, nobody knew about Clairon's criminal past.

Just as he did every other day, Raoul Clairon drove up to the law-courts with Kretschmer on this 31st of August, 1946. He stepped self-confidently out of the car and entered the building. He made up his mind to make a particularly detailed commentary, as there was sure to be a great deal to say about the defendants' final statements. The crush of people proved that. Interest in the trial was greater than it had been for months. The press-balcony was completely filled.

On the side of Fürth Street opposite the law-courts just before the beginning of the morning session stood three men in civilian clothes. Like hundreds of thousands at that time, they wore suits made from a greenish dyed cloth from the former supplies of the Wehrmacht.

With alert eyes they observed what was happening around them and committed to memory the approaches from the street to the court building, the deployment of the strengthened chain of sentries and the lines of fire of the tanks which had been drawn up.

Ulrich Lainz, Ralf Schilling and Elmar Stührk knew that they no longer had very much time left for their attack on Jackson or one of the judges.

'Next week,' said Lainz, and gave the sign to leave, 'in the interim period. Then the accused are allowed to be visited by their families. After that we have virtually no chance at all.'

Stührk and Schilling understood.

Chapter Sixteen

Paul Tanner had seen him. Only for a fraction of a second it was true, but he had recognised him. The angular face, the piercing eyes, the thick, slightly wavy hair, the movements which resembled those of an agile beast of prey.

Suddenly he was standing in the low peasant room near Jarostov, once more his hands were tied together behind his back, he heard the verdict being read out, the indifferent voice, saw the tall stove of baked clay, the rough table, and him.

Today, the day after his twenty-seventh birthday, he had been on the point of committing a murder in a public street. Only the fact that the young man who had attacked Barbara, was with him and that a third had joined them held him back at the last moment.

It had been a little after midday. Together with Barbara, Paul had taken a stroll along the ruins of the old city wall. At the barbican of the Frauentor they had avoided the people gathered together for the black market. Suddenly he had spotted the boy.

'Paul, please leave him alone.'

'You know I can't do that.' He pulled her along with him and did not let the boy out of his sight.

They had to cover quite a tidy stretch on foot before a situation arose which suited Paul's purposes. They were now in Mögeldorf, a suburb to the east of the city. Schmausenbuck Street was a main road through to the zoo. Siedler Street branched off to the right, just next to the Forst Wood.

Just as Paul was about to close the gap between them, the boy disappeared through a gate into one of the front gardens. Paul caught hold of Barbara's arm. From the cover of the wood, they watched the front garden and the little house belonging to it.

A short time later the boy had come out with a man behind him. It was not until they reached the street that Paul saw the face of the second person. His heart seemed to stand still.

Without moving he had stared across the road, but before

he could react a second man had come out of one of the side-streets, slightly built with darkish blond hair. The three of them walked off in the direction of Zerzabelshof.

Hurriedly he had explained what he had seen to Barbara. 'And you're quite positive?' Her voice was toneless.

'Yes,' he said.

'And what are you going to do?'

'I'm going after them.'

He turned to go.

'Don't worry, I'll take care. Now I know where I can find him, he won't escape me again.'

Hermetically sealed off from the outside world, the eight judges worked on the verdict and its comprehensive explanatory preamble. Sentries from the security unit were posted in front of the conference rooms. The telephone connections to the rooms had been cut off. One of the guards had the sole task of destroying the contents of the waste-paper baskets, another had to see that none of the employees took carbon copies, notes, or even used carbon-paper outside.

The interpreters who had to translate the text of the verdicts and the preambles from English into French, Russian and German lived in their rooms in the law-courts during this period. They were also not permitted to leave the area cordoned off by guards.

No hint of the result of the deliberations was to reach the outside world. Colonel Andersen checked several times a day to see that his security measures were being kept up.

Nevertheless, he did have the sandbags in the passages removed, reduced the other lines of guards to their previous strength and restored the relief of the sentries to every hour. Headquarters were no longer expecting an attack. For some time the identity cards of those who had business in the law-courts had been issued with photos. This seemed to Andersen to be sufficient protection for the interim period. For the two days of the announcement of the verdicts, special identity cards were to be issued and security precautions more stringent than any introduced before.

The General Secretariat allowed the defendants special privileges. The daily walk in the prison yard was extended by five minutes, the accused could visit one another in their cells,

and they could receive visits by their closest relatives in the interview-room.

'Berger' was brought over to the court building by two guards. They led him to the interview-room. On the other side of the table of cubicle 5 sat Henrike.

For one moment 'Berger' felt dizzy. They had not seen each other for more than a year. And even though he had secretly been expecting her visit, now that he was facing her, separated only by the sheet of glass, he was caught unprepared. He could not speak at first.

The guard told them they had thirty minutes and that all contact through the slit in the glass partition was forbidden.

Henrike 'Berger' pulled herself together. Her husband was not to know what thoughts were passing through her. She feigned calmness and confidence.

'Friedrich, you look well.'

'Henrike . . . !'

'My thoughts were with you day and night, Friedrich.'

'Henrike . . . forgive me for having done this to you!'

'But you haven't . . .'

'For ending up here, and meeting you like this. I've failed; failed in every aspect of my life!'

'No, Friedrich. You've achieved a great deal in your life. You've occupied your life with work, with responsible, hard work. It's not through any guilt of your own that you're here.'

'It is, Henrike. The guilt is mine alone. Not Hitler's, Goebbels's, not Himmler's . . .'

'Please, Friedrich, let's talk about something else.'

'Henrike, I must say this to you.' His gaze rested on her gently. 'For those things I had to answer for, the guilt is mine alone. I swear to you before God.'

'Yes, Friedrich.' She held back her tears. 'I believe you. I . . . ' Her voice gave out.

'You needn't say anything, I know we always understood one another and that we understand one another now.'

They were silent. They looked into each other's eyes and the minutes ticked by.

'Are you getting on all right?'

'Do you have enough money?'

'I have the jewellery.'

'Don't you want to go back home?'

'Our house has been requisitioned.'

'Or to your mother?'

'No. I'll wait for you. No matter how long.'

No matter how long! The thought clutched at his throat. She was talking about a future together to give him comfort! He did not argue. He did not want to make their parting unnecessarily difficult for her.

'And how is . . . ?' He dared not speak the name of his son.

The guard cleared his throat. The time had run out.

'And Claudius? How is he?'

'Claudius? I wrote you about him. He's getting on fine. Didn't you get my letter?'

'Yes. Only . . . I mean, where is he? Still in Rodach?'

'Yes. He's happy there.' When he said nothing, she added: 'I'm to give you his love.' She did not have the strength to tell him the truth.

'That's fine,' he said. 'Little Edda, Goering's daughter, was allowed to visit her father yesterday. Perhaps Claudius might be able to do so as well?'

'Certainly, Friedrich. I'll do everything I can to get it arranged.'

'Thank you, Henrike. A thousand times. Will you come again?'

'As often as I can.'

The guard took him by the arm and led him out.

Four times Henrike was able to visit her husband before the verdicts were announced. She answered his questions about Claudius by saying that he had 'flu and so could not come to Nuremberg.

Barbara and Paul had followed the three men discreetly. Paul realised that he would have to wait until the former *Hauptsturmführer* had separated from the other two.

The men walked a long way. They turned into Waldlust Street, crossed the Regensburg Road and down the other side of the railway underpass, turning right into the Luitpold Wood. Bomb-craters, charred ruins and shattered tree-stumps bordered the path.

In the middle of the wood, the men stopped. Paul and Barbara remained under cover. 'Please, Paul, let him go. I'm afraid for you.'

'If you want, you can go.'

'What good will it do?'

'I'll be able to breathe freely again, that's all.'

She said nothing. Together they watched the men who were now standing and talking slightly to one side of the deserted path. The oldest, Lainz, the man Paul was pursuing, was speaking forcefully to the two younger men.

He was giving Ralf Schilling and Elmar Stührk final instructions for the attack on the court, which was planned for the following day. He had brought Schilling and Stührk to the Luitpold Wood as this was the site of the new 'post-box'. He went on a few paces to the trunk of a bomb-shattered beech tree. Paul gave Barbara a sign to stay back, and crept after him.

Lainz reached inside the trunk and drew out a small box. 'Our identity cards with photographs for the law-courts.'

He handed out the cards 'Till tomorrow at nine in the Plärrer, then! And now we'll disappear separately. First you two.'

Schilling and Stührk nodded, and walked off in different directions. When they were out of sight, Lainz set out along the way to the former Congress Hall. Then Paul stepped out of his hiding-place. 'Hallo, *Hauptsturmführer*!'

Lainz started.

'*Hauptsturmführer*!' Paul called out again.

Lainz stopped 'Are you talking to me, by any chance?'

'Yes, *Hauptsturmführer*.'

'You're drunk.'

'Drunk with joy at our meeting again! Don't you remember? Jarostov! You condemned me to death!'

At that moment a woman appeared on a side-path. She was pushing an old pram full of firewood.

Lainz looked down at Paul. 'I don't know what you are talking about!' And then when he noticed the woman, he raised his voice: 'Leave me alone! You're mistaking me for someone else!' The woman stopped.

Paul took no notice of her. 'I couldn't possibly mistake you for anyone! 38th S.S. Armoured Assault Division. Not you, nor your friends either.'

The woman decided it would be better not to get mixed up in this, and pushed her pram on further. Only when she was a good way off did she stop again and look back at the men.

Paul walked on beside Lainz. 'Stand still, or I'll break your back!'

Lainz quickened his pace. Casually, he put his hand inside his

jacket pocket, his fingers closing round the Luger.

'Stand still!' Paul felt the blood rush into his face, and knew he was no longer capable of thinking clearly.

Suddenly he leaped on Lainz and struck with a blow of his fist against the back of his head. Lainz let out a suppressed cry and collapsed.

The woman with the pram looked on in horror. Then she ran off as fast as the pram allowed.

Paul threw himself on top of Lainz and smashed his fist into the man's face.

'There! And there! And that's for the others!'

Lainz realised the danger. He was almost out of action. A trickle of blood ran from the corner of his mouth to his chin. Exerting all his strength, he rolled to one side and fired the Luger.

Paul heard the dull 'crack' of the shot, felt the piercing pain in his left forearm, pulled himself up and kicked Lainz in the temple with the toe of his boot.

Lainz made no sound. He gritted his teeth, sped round and pointed the Luger at Paul's head. Paul watched. Frozen, as Lainz pulled back the trigger. Once, twice, three times. But he saw no flash from the muzzle, heard no explosion, felt no pain. He looked the man in the face and knew by his expression that he had won. The Luger had jammed.

Lainz realised he could not stay there one second longer. The shot would have been heard all over the neighbourhood. Hastily he weighed up the situation. The Congress Hall! He would lure his opponent into the Congress Hall. There he knew his way about; there he would finish him off and get away to safety.

The Congress Hall was a large steel building which had been put up in 1896 on the occasion of the Land Exhibition at the edge of the Luitpold Wood. In 1933 it was given the name of the 'Congress Hall' on Hitler's orders. Bombs and mines had destroyed it in 1942.

Now it resembled a barren, wasted landscape of buckled iron girders, steel strips, burst pipes, and splintered masts, and the floor was an ankle-deep lake of shattered glass.

Lainz worked his way forward to the place where the stage had been. It was from here that Hitler and Goebbels had pronounced their slogans; it was here that thousands of voices, united in a rhythmic chant of 'Sieg-Heil', had echoed out. He

himself had been one of the carefully chosen party comrades, had leaped up from his seat as Hitler, followed by Bormann, Himmler, Brückner and the others had entered the hall from the back and strode forward to the stage through the cheering crowd. In his ears he could still hear the echoing 'Men and women of the Party!' the chants of 'One Volk! One Reich! One Führer!'

All that was heard now was the crunch of broken glass under his cautious tread.

That told Paul where to go. Closer and closer he came towards him. Lainz held still and listened for the sounds coming from the confusion of shattered pieces of iron. Quietly he took the Luger in his hands, unloaded it, pulled the trigger, heard the click of the cock with relief and reloaded with fresh ammunition. It would not let him down again.

He raised himself, saw the head of his enemy barely ten paces away, got him in his sights and squeezed the trigger. A roar filled the steel ruin. The jam was freed.

Paul had seen as Lainz raised the pistol, had dropped to the ground and heard the crack of the shot. He knew he had made a fatal mistake in following the man in there. He had been relying on the jammed mechanism staying out of action. Now that the pistol was firing again he no longer stood a chance. The only choice left for him was to retreat.

His breath was coming fast. As he tensed his muscles to move, a deafening boom shattered the silence in the ruin. 'Attention please! Achtung! Achtung! This is the military police!' Over the megaphone came the order to come out at once. The M.P. had surrounded the area.

Lainz put up bitter resistance to the last. Only after he had been winged by a bullet in the hip did he give himself up.

Half an hour later Paul sat in the building of the Military Government opposite the duty-officer. After a long interrogation he was able to explain the incident. A short while before curfew, he was free again.

Lainz stayed in custody. He was handed over to the C.I.C. next day. Clinton Keen subjected him to a merciless interrogation. After nine hours he was certain that Lainz was one of the conspirators with Gisela Silinski. He had him sent to the Kings Camp in Oberursel, where the other arrested men from 'Battle-Group Edelweiss' were already held. Once faced with his

comrades, Lainz gave up. To improve his situation, he betrayed Ralf Schilling and Elmar Stührk.

The following day Paul learned that Barbara had saved his life. Driven by fear, she had run to the nearest police-station and called the military police from there.

The 30th of September, a Monday, was a warm autumnal day.

Jeeps of the M.P. and tanks stood outside the law-courts. A double line of guards watched over all strategically important points. At the entrance to the court-room, everyone, regardless of whether he was a German or an Ally, had to submit to a thorough body-search.

Colonel Andersen wanted to spare the defence counsel this time-consuming procedure. He had them examined in their common-room. G I.s from the security unit searched their brief-cases, under their robes and white ties for weapons or similar objects.

Today the reading of the preamble to the judgment began.

The crowding in the room exceeded all expectations. The press-balcony was overflowing. Extra chairs were placed at the desks of the defence, increasing the seating to thirty-two. The men from the newsreels set up their cameras in position. For the first time in a long while the assistants of the prosecution were all present.

For the German journalists, a larger common-room, a former court-room, was provided. There was a raised platform behind the barrier. Under the ceiling, a loudspeaker had been installed. The journalists who had not found a place in the court-room could follow the instantaneous translation of the proceedings here.

The clock in the room said three minutes past ten.

In a piercing voice, the Marshal of the Court announced: 'Attention! The Court!' The judges entered the room.

Without visible nervousness, Lawrence opened the session. In the sequence of Lawrence, Birkett, Donnedieu di Vabres, Falco, Biddle, Parker, Nikitchenko and Volchkov, the judges took over from one another in reading the speech.

The preamble took up the entire day of proceedings.

On the next day, the 1st of October, the second day of judgment, the court announced their findings in the morning, and then passed sentence in the afternoon.

All photographers and newsreel men were excluded from the

afternoon session. The important papers in England and the United States protested.

They were permitted to be present in the morning. The tension in the room could scarcely have been greater.

Raoul Clarron sat leaning forward, and studied the faces of the accused with a pair of opera-glasses.

The findings of guilt were given according to the four counts of the indictment: Count one: conspiracy. Count two: crimes against peace. Count three: war crimes. Count four: crimes against humanity.

'Defendant Hermann Wilhelm Goering.' Goering rose. Like Dönitz and Frank he kept his eyes hidden behind dark glasses.

'Next to Hitler, he was the most important man of the government. He had great influence on him, at least until 1943. From his own confessions before this Tribunal, from the positions he occupied, the discussions he took part in and from his own public statements, there can be no doubt that Goering was the driving force towards wars of aggression and was second only to Hitler. Goering's guilt is unique in its enormity. For this man no mitigation can be found in the entire material of the trial.'

Guilty on all four counts of the indictment.

Goering knew that these words meant the death-sentence.

With a waxen face he stared straight in front of him. At the corners of his mouth there played an inexplicable smile.

Hess: guilty on counts one and two

Ribbentrop: guilty on all four counts.

Keitel: guilty on all four counts.

Kaltenbrunner: guilty on counts three and four.

Rosenberg guilty on all four counts.

Frank: guilty on counts three and four.

Frick: guilty on counts two, three and four.

Streicher: guilty on count four.

Funk: guilty on counts two, three and four.

Schacht: not guilty.

A murmur went through the room.

Schacht heard the announcement with a superior smile.

Lawrence bent forward to the microphone. 'The Tribunal requests that there should be no expression of opinion.' The disturbance quietened down.

Donitz: guilty on counts two and three.

Raeder: guilty on counts one, two and three.

Schirach: guilty on count four.

Sauckel: guilty on counts three and four.

Jodl: guilty on all four counts.

Papen: not guilty.

Seyss-Inquart: guilty on counts two, three and four.

Speer: guilty on counts three and four.

Neurath: guilty on all four counts.

Fritzsche: not guilty.

'Berger': guilty on counts two and four.

In the afternoon the Tribunal announced the sentences. Apart from the three men who were found not guilty, Schacht, Papen and Fritzsche, the defendants were each brought up separately in the lift to the court-room to hear their sentences.

The door of the lift opened quietly. Goering took one step out. The guards who had brought him up and now stood to the left and right of him, signalled to him to stand where he was.

The room looked different to him from previous days. The floodlights were switched off, there were no photographers' flashlights. Only the pale and gloomy fluorescent lights gave off their glow and bathed the scene in a ghostly semi-darkness. The dock was empty. The faces of the people there seemed lifeless.

Goering stood one step inside the room, a forlorn figure.

Someone coughed.

Goering put on the headphones which a guard handed him.

'Defendant Hermann Wilhelm Goering, in accordance with . . . ' Then the translation stopped. The interpreter had to begin again.

'Defendant Wilhelm Goering, in accordance with the counts of the indictment under which you were found guilty, the International Military Tribunal condemns you to death by hanging.'

For an instant Goering stood motionless. Then he turned on his heel and disappeared into the lift.

One after the other they were brought up and heard their sentences. The last one to step out of the lift was 'Berger'.

His eyes turned to the judges' bench. The silence in the room roared in his ears. In a few seconds it will be all over, the thought flashed through his head. Everything, hope, belief in the future, life.

As though in a trance he took the headphones.

'Defendant Friedrich "Berger".'

The voice seemed to be speaking to him from an infinite distance away. He forced himself to follow, and yet he knew he was incapable of hearing one word of it. Henrike, he thought, Claudius, please forgive me!

‘... to life imprisonment.’

Life imprisonment? His heart began beating wildly. Life? Not the gallows? He hardly dared to breathe. Life! He was given back to life!

His knees threatened to give way under him. With an effort he managed to reach the door to the lift. He saw one of the guards point to his head. The headphones! Dizzy with shock, he had forgotten to give the headphones back.

Besides Goering, Ribbentrop, Keitel, Kaltenbrunner, Rosenberg, Frick, Frank, Streicher, Sauckel, Jodl, Seyss Inquart, and *in absentia* Martin Bormann, were condemned to death by hanging. Hess, Funk and Raeder received sentences of life imprisonment, Schirach and Speer twenty, Neurath fifteen and Dönitz ten years in gaol.

Of the accused organisations, the political leadership, the Gestapo, the S.D. and the S.S. were found guilty. Not the S.A., the Reich Government, nor the General Staff.

When ‘Berger’ stepped out of the lift into the cellar vaults, a guard stood ready with handcuffs, chained him to himself and took him through the underground passage and the covered wooden gallery back to his cell.

Goering, who was the first to be brought back to his cell, had dropped limply on to his plank bed ‘Death.’ With unsteady hands he reached for a book. His eyes were staring with horror.

The defending counsel wrote petitions for clemency to the Allied Control Council in Berlin. Kaltenbrunner, Schirach and Speer refused to appeal for clemency. The petitions for Goering, Streicher, Frank and Neurath were lodged without the assent of their clients.

‘Berger’ would not allow Vesenstedt to lodge a petition for clemency for him either. The time-limit was due to expire at midnight on the 5th of October. It was the last day on which the defending counsel were able to meet with the condemned men.

Vesenstedt had asked for permission to speak to ‘Berger’ at ten o’clock.

Chapter Seventeen

They sat opposite one another in the fourth cubicle of the interview-room. 'Berger' was chained to a guard who had taken a seat beside him.

He's lost a lot of weight, thought Vesenstedt. It seemed to him that they had not seen one another for an infinitely long time, though scarcely eight days had passed since their last meeting.

'I'd like to say goodbye to you.' He bowed very slightly towards the glass partition.

'And I'd like to thank you. For your help, for your self-sacrifice, for . . . ' 'Berger' could not remain unmoved by their parting.

'May I come back once more to the question of a petition for clemency?' Vesenstedt had regained his composure.

'But my dear Dr. Vesenstedt, didn't we agree?'

'No. I recommended a petition for clemency.'

'There'd be no point.'

'There's nothing to suggest that. Remember, some months ago we had a similar difference of opinion?'

'When I thought it was pointless to continue my defence? I know.'

Vesenstedt saw he suddenly had a chance to convince 'Berger'. He took his time. 'At that time you refused to accept that the questions of general guilt were linked with the judgments found against individual people. And now? The entire armaments industries and their financiers, the economists and bankers have been removed from the category of 'crime' along with Schacht. The technical men now stand in a better light thanks to Speer, and Papen's acquittal has improved the position of large groups of politicians and administrators. Don't the acquittals impose tremendous limitations on the concept of collective guilt? I would say they raise very serious doubts about it! Couldn't your petition for clemency be an attempt to achieve still more in this direction?'

'Berger' thought for a moment.

'Maybe you're right.'

Vesenstedt breathed a sigh of relief. With a swift movement he took the already prepared petition from his brief-case and handed it to the guard for approval. A few minutes later the guard passed the document through the slit in the partition.

'Berger' skimmed through it, signed, and passed it back.

'And Claudius? What have you heard about Claudius?'

'He's well.'

'Has he got over his 'flu?'

'His 'flu?'

'My wife told me he had had 'flu.' 'Berger' hesitated, and then added: 'That was why he could not visit me.'

'Oh yes, the 'flu! He's got over his flu, yes. I'm to give you his love. He's already looking forward to the day when he can visit you for the first time.'

'Really?' 'Berger's' face lit up. 'Did he say that? He's looking forward to it?' Then at once he became pensive. 'But when will that be? Five years? Ten?'

'Perhaps considerably earlier.' Vesenstedt no longer had to lie to his client. Two days ago he had been to Coburg. His youth and his unusually good powers of recovery had brought Claudius through the worst and the doctors were confident that Claudius would get well again.

The guard glanced at the clock on the wall. The time was up for the interview.

'Well then . . . ' With his free hand, 'Berger' made a clumsy gesture as though to shake hands. For a moment he had forgotten that they were separated by a sheet of glass.

'I wish you good health,' said Vesenstedt, 'and I'll often be with you in my thoughts.'

'Thank you.' The guard got up, and 'Berger' was forced to do likewise.

'And please give my love to my wife and my son.'

'I will. Goodbye.'

The guard took a step towards the door. 'Berger' was pulled along with him because of the handcuffs. He turned round once more. 'I've got one more request: it would be very nice if you could write to me from time to time.'

'I promise to.' Vesenstedt watched his client go. The door closed behind. 'Berger'.

For Vesenstedt the trial was finally at an end. He went across

to the central building and handed in the petition for clemency at the General Secretariat. Afterwards he went to the defending counsel's room. A general 'end-of-term' spirit reigned here. Vesenstedt packed up his remaining documents, put his Tribunal identity card, Barbara's and the two canteen cards in an envelope and addressed it to the Secretariat.

He went slowly down the stairway with its broad marble banisters. In the corridors there was a normal everyday bustle. Many of the faces were new to him, however.

When he went out into the forecourt, a light rain began to fall.

All the petitions for clemency were rejected. The time advanced inexorably.

The executions were planned for the night of the 15th to the 16th of October in the gymnasium. The condemned men were not informed of the time and place.

Through the cell-window came the sounds of hammering and sawing. The gallows, thought Goering, they're putting up the gallows!

He was wrong. A new entrance to the gymnasium was being built on the side away from the cell-windows on Colonel Andersen's orders. He wanted to spare the men condemned to death the sight of the gallows arriving. The fact that the executions were to be carried out in the gymnasium was supposed to be kept secret until the last.

On the evening of the 15th of October Andersen made the gymnasium available for a game of basket-ball between two teams of guards. Today he instructed the players to put on a particularly loud and enthusiastic game. The G.I.s obliged without knowing the reason for the request.

The game came to an end and the players went into an adjoining room to take showers. While the showers were turned full on, the execution team entered the hall through the new entrance. The players did not notice anything.

The scaffold was assembled. The stretchers were brought in. The box-like coffins got ready. Two heavy lorries of the U.S. Army were parked behind the gymnasium. The bodies were to be carried away in these.

A good hour later in the little hall a platform about ten yards wide was covered in black cloth. On this stood three gallows. They too were black. Behind the three gallows hung a long black curtain. The scene was lit up with floodlights. Opposite the scaffold stood eight tables for the observers.

Master-Sergeant John C. Woods of San Antonio in Texas was supervising the execution. With the eye of an expert, he inspected the arrangements. In the last fifteen years he had hanged more than 300 soldiers. Here in Nuremberg he had two assistants at his side.

It was 10.45 p.m.

In his office, Colonel Andersen put on his uniform jacket and the green helmet which made him easy to pick out from the other members of the guard unit. On his desk lay the folder containing the sentences.

He had decided to begin the readings of the sentences in the cell of defendant number one, Hermann Goering, at eleven o'clock. It was likely to be midnight by the time he had read out the sentences to all the eleven men condemned to death. However, the condemned men were to have another hour after that to compose themselves.

Goering went into the toilet alcove. This alcove was the only part of the cells where the prisoner could be out of the sight of the guards. The sentry saw only Goering's feet.

After a while he went back, lay down on the bed, and pulled the coarse woollen blanket up to his chest, keeping, in accordance with the regulations, his hands on top of the blanket. After some time he went back to the toilet once more.

The guard thought he heard a noise that sounded like the cracking of a hazelnut. Immediately afterwards Goering returned to his bed.

He lay still. After some minutes his hands began to move about over the blanket as though haphazardly looking for something. Suddenly they clenched. Little by little his whole body began to twitch, his feet began kicking and flailing.

Hurriedly he called the other guards over, quickly opened the cell-door and rushed inside. Goering's face had turned blue.

The officer on duty hurried to the scene, then the three other guards, and after a few minutes Pastor Gerecke and Dr. Pflücker as well.

Goering was past help.

When Colonel Andersen entered the cell out of breath, Goering was dead.

The men stood round the plank-bed. Dr. Pflücker was examining the dead man. He held his wrist, still felt a weak

pulse, tested the corneal reflex, and turned to Andersen. 'This man is dead.'

'Potassium cyanide?' asked Andersen.

The doctor nodded.

The sentry who had been watching Goering handed Andersen the letter on the bed. Andersen saw that the letter was addressed to him. Without opening the envelope, he put it in the outside pocket of his jacket.

On the floor there lay a small brass cartridge. It was the casing in which the poison capsule had been kept. Andersen took possession of that also.

Then he walked with hurried steps to the central part of the court building and deposited the brass cartridge and the letter with the General Secretariat. As a professional officer he was most concerned not to come under any suspicion of manipulation.

Next day a commission of inquiry was set up. The letter and the cartridge were produced as evidence. After the inquiry, the commission offered some hypotheses as to how Goering might have come by the poison capsule, and where he could have kept it. The true facts, however, were only given in a letter.

Goering had left three letters behind. A farewell letter to his wife, a political obituary addressed to the German people and the letter to Colonel Andersen.

He had intended the letter to Andersen to be an exoneration of the security unit. Not until twenty years later did its contents reach the public. It was to be withheld from the German population.

The only version heard by the German public was that apparently one of the pressmen had stuck Goering's poison capsule under the balustrade of the dock with chewing gum.

Twenty years later, on the 10th of October 1966, through the General Service Administration, National Archives and Records Service, a copy of 'Exhibit AM' from 'The Report of the Board Proceedings in the case of Hermann Goering (suicide), October 1946' became public. It was the letter to Colonel Andersen. It read: 'To the Commandant: I had the poison capsule with me during the whole time since my arrest. When I went to Mondorf I had three capsules. I left one of them in my suit so that it could be found when I was searched. The second one I hid under my clothes-rack when I was undressed, and then took back when I got dressed. I hid it so well both in

Mondorf and here in my cell that it could not be found in spite of the frequent and thorough checks. During the proceedings of the Tribunal I hid it on my person or in my high riding boots. The third capsule is still in my little case, in the round tin with my face-cream. If I had needed it, I could have taken it at any time in Mondorf. None of the guards bears any blame as it was practically impossible to find the capsules. It would only have been by pure chance. Hermann Goering.'

In October 1946, eight days after Goering's death, the commission of inquiry finally recognised the account in the letter as being the only true one. In the face of the elaborate security precautions, Goering's claims had not seemed very convincing at first. Only the result of a thorough search of all the other cells had persuaded them.

Keitel had hidden four steel nuts, two sharp-edged metal bolts, a piece of steel strip like a knife and had a safety-pin concealed in his shirt.

In Neurath's cell they found a towel, various pieces of string and a steel screw.

Schacht had managed to hide a yard-long cord from the checks in his cell.

Jodl had had a piece of wire a foot long, several sharply-pointed pencils and a broken spindle in his cell.

Ribbentrop had been in possession of a glass bottle.

Dönitz had concealed five shoe-laces knotted together, and Sauckel had kept a broken-off, sharp-edged spoon.

Robert Houghwout Jackson had been asked to make a statement about Goering's suicide. He declared: 'Goering has himself destroyed the myth he created of the bravery, the steadfastness and the high principles of the Nazis. The real significance of the suicide lies in its meaning for the German public. Goering was the only one of the condemned men about whom a legend of martyrdom could have grown up, but he did not have sufficient strength of character.'

Andersen hurried back from the General Secretariat to the cell area. The fact that prisoner number one had succeeded in committing suicide prompted him to increase the security measures for the short time before the executions. Immediately, the men who were condemned to death had to be chained by their left hands to a guard.

Then Andersen began to read the sentence to the condemned

man number two, Joachim von Ribbentrop. It was 11.38 p.m.

Andersen was accompanied by ten witnesses. The interpreter and an officer from the guards had entered the cell with him. The others, including the German medical attendant Dr. Pflucker and Pastor Gerecke, stood in the open door and outside in the passage.

Ribbentrop stood next to his bed. He held the blanket in front of him and listened to the reading with an impassive face.

When it was over he was informed of Goering's suicide and a guard chained himself to him. Andersen and the witnesses went into the next cell, that of Wilhelm Keitel.

Ribbentrop was given his suit. He had not worn it since the end of the proceedings. Two sentries dressed him. Then he said a short prayer with Pastor Gerecke. 'I entrust my soul to God.'

The food-porters brought the last meal. Canned pork, tomato and potato salad, pancakes and coffee. Ribbentrop, chained to the guard, ate with his free hand. After a few bites he pushed the food away.

When Andersen had read all the sentences, he came back to Ribbentrop's cell. 'Are you ready?' Ribbentrop nodded.

It had been originally planned that the condemned men should be brought to the execution chamber chained by one hand. After Goering's suicide, Andersen ordered that they should have their hands chained behind their backs.

It was 1.05 a.m.

Two sentries took Ribbentrop between them. Andersen walked beside them. They were followed by the two prison pastors and a troop of six military policemen. Floodlights bathed the path across the rain-wet courtyard beneath the night-sky in a milky light.

At the entrance to the gymnasium, an American major and two military police took custody of the prisoner and led him to the brightly-lit platform.

In the shadows beyond the floodlights thirty observers sat at the eight tables and watched the scene. Among them were the Soviet General Molkov, the French General Morel, the British General Walsh and the U.S. General Richard. Two Soviet, French, British and American journalists. As German witnesses there were the Prime Minister of Bavaria, Dr. Wilhelm Hoegner and the Attorney-General of Nuremberg-Fürth, Dr. Friedrich Leistner.

The military police took off Ribbentrop's handcuffs and tied

his hands together with a cord. The Major asked him to state his name. 'Joachim von Ribbentrop.' The military policeman led him up the thirteen steps to the first gallows. At the top he was met by the two assistants of Master-Sergeant Woods. They tied his legs together at the ankles.

Pastor Gerecke spoke a short prayer. Ribbentrop said in an exhausted voice: 'God protect Germany. May God have mercy on my soul. My last wish is that German unity should be maintained, that understanding between East and West be realised and that there be peace in the world.'

Woods slipped the noose round his neck. The two assistants placed a black hood over his head and Woods pulled the lever operating the trap-door.

It was 1.14 a.m.

At 1.28 a.m. a Russian and an American doctor declared Ribbentrop dead.

At short intervals, the other condemned men were brought into the gymnasium. By 3.46 a.m. they had all been hanged.

Behind the black curtain the corpses were laid out beside one another. Then two guards brought Goering's body in on a stretcher. It was wrapped in a khaki coloured U.S. Army blanket. The naked feet stuck out, white and exposed.

Together with the others, Goering's corpse was photographed by Lieutenant Maurice S. McLaughlin, the news photographer of the U.S. Signal Corps. Four times dressed, and four times naked. Then the bodies were weighed.

The guards put them into the rough coffins and loaded them on to the trucks. At four o'clock in the morning, when the people of Nuremberg still lay deep in sleep, the trucks moved off.

Representatives of the world press had waited out the night in the rain in front of the exit from the prison compound. After the trucks had passed through the gate, they drove after them. A few streets further on, the way was barred by a jeep with a machine-gun mounted on it.

Undisturbed by pursuers, the trucks reached the autobahn and drove the corpses to Munich. In the crematorium of the East Cemetery they were burned. Military policemen strewed the ashes in the River Isar.

As Colonel Andersen went into his office early that morning, his secretary handed him a telegram from the States. An American citizen was offering 25,000 dollars for the rope that would have hanged Goering.

The times of the executions were first transmitted over the radio.

Clinton switched the receiver off when the last execution, that of Arthur Seyss-Inquart, had been announced. 'Okay. Now we have to act.' He was talking about the arrest of Clairon.

'Do you want to be there?' Joe took down his uniform jacket from the hook.

'Not likely.' Clinton raised his hands as though warding off the idea 'You and the boys from the M.P. will manage okay.'

In the radio studio Clairon had dropped listlessly into an armchair, his eyes staring into space.

'Mr Clairon?' One of the technicians bent over him.

'What is it?'

Clairon looked up angrily.

'A man wants to talk to you.'

'In the middle of the night?'

'He says it's important. Very important.'

At that moment a man entered the room. He was in civilian clothes. 'It's me,' he said apologetically to Clairon, and made a sign indicating that he thought it better if they were alone. In a swift movement Clairon stood up, grabbed hold of the man's arm and pushed him into the dark adjoining room.

'For God's sake, Dick, are you insane? Coming here!'

Dick Griffith was a sergeant in the U.S. Army, and worked in the Military Government. For Clairon he was a secret link with the Military Government.

In a few hurried words, Dick told him about the planned arrest.

Clairon was stunned. After a few moments' thought he pulled himself together. 'A taxi!'

'A taxi? You're crazy!'

'A hired car then! Quick!'

In fifteen minutes the car was ready to go.

'Where to, sir?' The driver, a plain, honest German, turned to him.

'First make for Munich.'

'Munich? Impossible. I haven't got that much petrol, not a permit either.'

'I've got coupons. As many as we need.'

'And what if the M.P. catch us?'

'I'm an American officer!'

The driver moved off. On the autobahn Clairon told him to stop. He peered out, trying to penetrate the darkness. He was reassured. No one had followed him.

'And now?' The driver looked back at Clairon uncertainly.

'To Mannheim!'

'Out of the question. You should have told me before. My wife . . .'

'I'll pay in dollars!'

'And what if they catch me with them?'

'Okay. I'll change them in Mannheim. Into German money . . . American goods – whatever you want. Here.' He held out a ten-dollar note towards him. 'On account.'

The driver put the note in his pocket.

In Mannheim Clairon changed cars. Travelling via Kaiserslautern, he eventually arrived in Saarbrücken, part of the area under French control. The arm of the Americans did not reach as far as that. Saarbrücken was as far from Nuremberg as Paris was from Washington. Clairon was safe. Like the rest of the world, he too had left the night of the 15th to 16th of October behind him.

On the platform of Nuremberg's bombed-out main railway-station, Barbara Vesenstedt and Paul Tanner stood facing one another. They were saying goodbye.

'I want to thank you, Barbara. You've got my life straightened out again.'

'Nonsense, Paul. You have . . . you are . . .' She turned away. 'It was very nice being with you.'

He took hold of her shoulder and forced her to look at him. 'Barbara, come on now! You've got . . .'

'I just got something in my eye. It's all right now.' She sniffed. 'I think you ought to go now, otherwise . . .'

'Otherwise what?'

'Otherwise I'll miss my train.' She looked among the other passengers for her father. He was waiting patiently a few steps away from her.

'The train isn't even here yet!' Paul laughed. 'Is there a black market in Hamburg too?'

'Why not?'

'And a cheap place to sleep? Maybe even some work? As a navvy?'

'Could be.' She flushed with pleasure. 'Why do you ask?' She

knew the answer, but did not dare admit it to herself.

'When does the train leave, did you say?'

'Eleven minutes past eight.'

'It's twelve minutes till then!' Without a word of explanation, he turned on his heel and raced towards the exit and his lodgings. Moving like the wind he packed his belongings together into a bundle, pushed a packet of cigarettes into the pocket of the man who watched over the quarters there, and stormed up the stairs.

The big hand on the clock over the station entrance was creeping towards fourteen minutes past eight. Two minutes too late!

She was still standing there on the platform. Her father had moved up to her side. The train was two hours behind schedule. Paul put his bundle down beside them without a word.

Vesenstedt's thoughts were absorbed in the law-courts. On the 15th of November, a new trial was due to begin there. The accused were Wehrmacht and S.S. doctors who had carried out inhuman experiments. Unlike the trial of the chief war-criminals, the subsequent trials were to take place before an American military court. Which of his colleagues would take up his place at the desks of the defence? What judge would be replacing Sir Geoffrey Lawrence? What state of mind was 'Berger' in now? Would he ever find a way to live with his guilt?

Paul's appearance brought him back to the present. He looked down at the bundle, and then looked questioningly at Paul. 'Had enough of Nuremberg?'

'Yes,' said Paul, 'I'd like to try my luck in Hamburg. Maybe I'll find my parents there.'

As soon as he arrived in Saarbrücken, Raoul Clairon went to see the head of the radio station. The next day he was Chief Commentator of Radio Saarbrücken. It took six months for contact to be established between the C.I.C. and the French Military Government. The French police arrested Clairon. He feigned an attempt at suicide in order to get himself moved to the prison hospital, and from there he fled to Paris. After a few weeks his name appeared as political editor of the newspaper *Le Monde*. Three-quarters of a year went by before he came to the attention of an officer of the Sûreté. Once again Clairon managed to escape. For the last time, so it seemed. In the spring of 1949 his name cropped up publicly once more. A simple

gravestone in the Belleville Cemetery in Paris announced his death. Whether he was really dead, however, no one could say for sure.

Clinton Keen became reconciled with Karin. On the 23rd of November, after the ban on fraternisation was lifted, there was a short notice in almost all the German newspapers: 'Karin Ruland from Berlin, recently a secretary in Nuremberg, became the first German girl since the war to receive an entrance visa to the U.S.A. Her fiancé, the U.S. Captain Clinton Keen, has been ordered back to his homeland. The couple wish to marry this year in Texarkana.'

Bob Hammersmith requested Army Headquarters for a transfer to Japan. He wanted to forget Nuremberg.

THE END

Original Report

NUREMBERG NEWS

Saturday, July 6th 1946

NUREMBERG ATTACK PLAN DISCOVERED

Nuremberg, July 4th (DANA) – Strong counter-measures by the Military Police foiled an attack on the Nuremberg International Military Tribunal planned by seven former S.S.-men for the period between the 6th and 20th of February of this year.

Allan Dreyfuss reports in the American Army newspaper *Stars and Stripes*, that these S.S.-men tried to obtain forged identity papers and Allied uniforms in order to get into the court-room and murder the judges and prosecutors. As a diversionary manoeuvre disturbances were supposed to be organised simultaneously in Nuremberg, Hof, Regensburg and Munich.

The Military Police had found out about this plan in January, and together with the army authorities took counter-measures at once so as to nip the attempt in the bud. The guards were given machine pistols. Inside the court building bullet-proof positions were set up for the sentries, and for all persons working in the law-courts new identity cards with photographs which could not be copied were introduced.

The contents of the article published in the *Stars and Stripes* were confirmed by American Headquarters.

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The author wishes to express his thanks for many personal conversations to, among others, Dr Robert M. W. Kempner (then prosecutor), Albert Speer (then defendant), Dr Alfred Seidl and Otto Kranzbühler (then defending counsel), and all those who helped him to produce this book.

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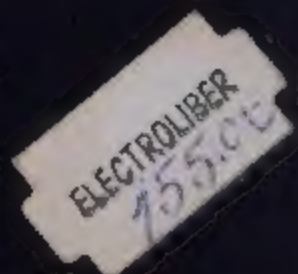
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